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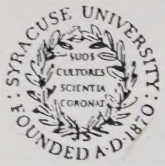

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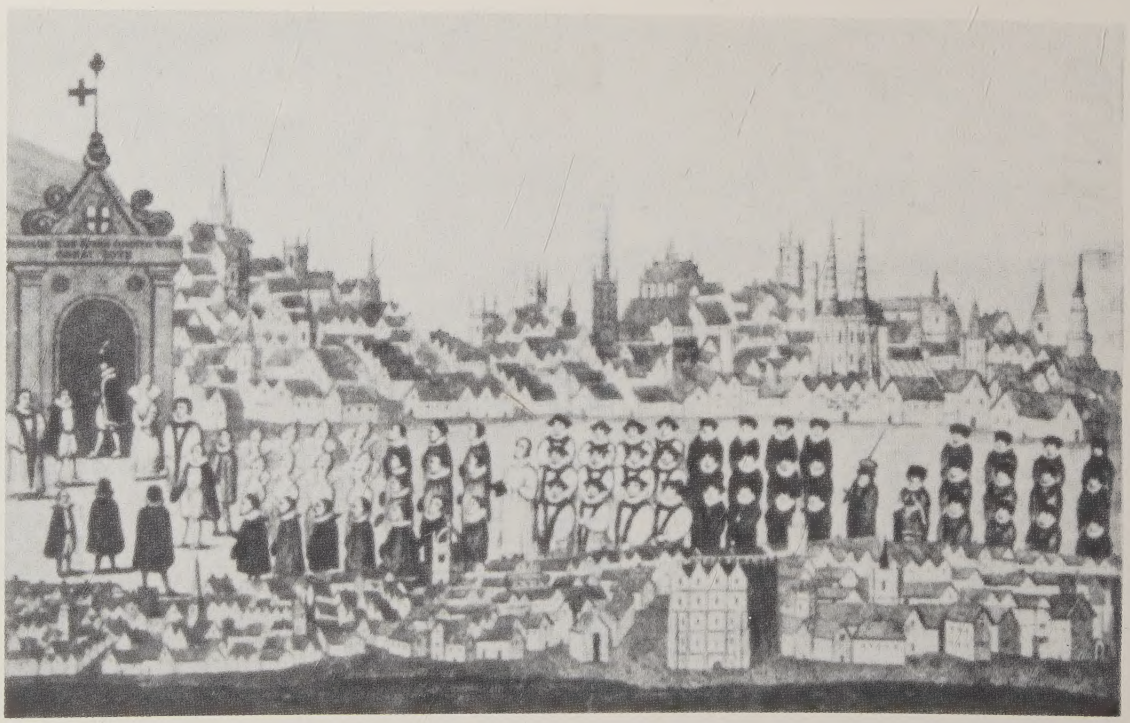

A Royal Procession to St. Paul's. 1616

From a Painting in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries. Nichol's "Progresses of James I." 1828

SOCIAL LIFE IN STUART ENGLAND

BY

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WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THESE brief essays on the "Social Life of England under the Stuarts" have been expanded from a series of lectures given first at Westfield College, in the University of London, in 1921, and later in Oxford, but they are also the fruit of some years' research work on the history of England in the seventeenth century.

My thanks are due to Professor Sir Charles Firth, Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford, who first directed my studies to this period, and to whom I am indebted for much help and encouragement; to Colonel Prideaux-Brune, of Prideaux Place, Padstow, for permission to transcribe the original letters in his possession from Sir William Morice to Edmund Prideaux, and for much kind hospitality; to Westfield College, for the Research Studentship which enabled me to pursue my researches in London in 1921; and lastly, and especially, to Miss Elizabeth Levett, of St. Hilda's Hall, Oxford, and King's College, London, my former tutor, and Vice-Principal, who has read the whole book in manuscript, and from whom I have received invaluable help and criticism.

MARY COATE

OXFORD

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INTRODUCTION

HISTORY, once regarded as a pageant of kings and queens or a tale of "old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago," has now come to mean something more intimate, in fact, nothing less than the record of the daily life and common thought of ordinary men and women. Such a conception, though wider than that which it replaced, is not without its dangers, for the student of social history, in pursuing the indispensable details, is apt to lose sight of the wider issues and more general problems.

In the seventeenth century this is more difficult, for its inherent interest lies in its controversies, and in the conflict between two diverging schools of thought. The Tudor monarchs had bequeathed to the Stuarts not merely a tradition of paternal despotism, but a freedom from external aggression which gave the necessary leisure for definitions. King and subject alike sought to define, for the temper of men's minds had altered; they were more speculative and critical, less disposed to obey blindly, and more eager to search out the foundations of belief, whether in politics or theology. In short, the seventeenth century is a constructive period, a time of hot controversy and amazing interest.

Two tendencies were struggling for predominance in the mind of the average Englishman—an historical

spirit, which led him to cite precedent for all his actions; and at the same time an inquisitive temper, which drove him to recast his beliefs and lay the foundations of a new order. Of the two influences, the antiquarian and conservative was the more potent.

It lay at the root of the attempt to trace the origin of government to some mythical social contract, it prompted the definition by Laud and Andrewes of the antiquity and catholicism of the Church of England, and it inspired the great histories of Raleigh and Clarendon. Some, like Selden and Thoresby, were moved by it to antiquarian research, but others turned to it for support in political controversy, for the most determined republican repudiated the title of innovator and asserted passionately that he was claiming a heritage lawfully his own. More than this, the love of the "living past" permeated the daily life of ordinary men and women; it explains the frequent references in their letters to classical and mediæval history, and it accounts for the large numbers of historical works which are to be found in any seventeenth-century library. There were many country squires and city merchants who read history not merely for profit, but "for delight."

Closely akin to this love of history was a passionate reverence for law, a reverence largely due to the force of circumstances, for the Crown, by flinging upon the shoulders of the lesser nobility the burden of local government, had driven it inevitably to legal study. The irony of history lies in the fact that it was this very legal spirit, which the Crown had generated, which was the most powerful lever in its overthrow.

Antiquity and law—such were the foundations of belief and the most dominant influences in the life of the average Englishman of Stuart times. "Remove

not the ancient landmarks" might be taken as his motto.

Yet such a view only reveals a part of the truth, for it ignores the speculative and scientific spirit, which, if less widely diffused, was in particular cases more dynamic. In ordinary minds, it was merely the eager curiosity of the Renaissance, the frank and naïve delight in the marvellous, and the childlike acceptance of the supernatural, and it explains alike the delightful details of travellers' tales, and the almost universal belief in witchcraft. But in finer minds this inquisitiveness became nothing less than a genuine scientific spirit, which inspired the researches of Harvey and Boyle, and ultimately resulted in the foundation of the Royal Society.

In politics and in theology the same critical spirit drove men, almost in spite of themselves, to dispute authority and to assert passionately the freedom of the individual judgment; in the one it led to the premature experiment of the Commonwealth, in the other to a multiplicity of sects. It is true that in some rare spirits, like John Evelyn, these two tendencies, the historical and the scientific, worked together in absolute harmony, but more often they are found not merely independent of, but actually hostile to each other. The eternal conflict between them is the keynote to the history of the seventeenth century.

Such a period, so fraught with the most fundamental controversies, can never be regarded as merely picturesque; yet to many the seventeenth century suggests only the portraits of Van Dyck and Lely, or the personal vagaries of Roundhead and Cavalier. To combat a view so superficial, it is necessary to reconstruct the daily lives of these Stuart men and women, to show that behind the haunting beauty of

the portraits lies the passionate controversy of the past, while even more essential is it to emphasize that the "Makers of History" number also the obscure, the undistinguished, and the forgotten.

Thus the writer of social history does not aim at presenting a caste of seventeenth-century marionettes, or a pageant of famous personages; his task is rather to portray the daily life and surroundings of ordinary men and women, in the hope that by so doing he may make their thought and actions a little more intelligible.

The materials for such a study are peculiarly varied and abundant. Innumerable State Papers and contemporary news-books, and almost equally numerous private diaries and memoirs, legal documents of private estates, parish registers and churchwardens' accounts, all these throw light on the minds and actions of Stuart men and women, and it is from these sources that this brief review has been compiled. Only in a secondary degree has there been time and space to utilize the peculiarly attractive art and literature of the period, but if these short essays stimulate others to a research in which the writer has delighted, they will have attained their primary object.

SOCIAL LIFE IN STUART ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE LAND

"THE Earth is the common Treasury of all," said Winstanley, and thus expressed in one pregnant phrase not only the literal truth, but the thought of every Englishman of his day. The seventeenth century, unlike the twentieth, never doubted the supreme importance of the land; it was the granary of the nation, the recruiting-ground of the militia, and the source of all political power and influence. To men of the most diverse type it made its appeal. Traherne beheld the fields of "orient wheat," and saw in them the inheritance of all the ages, while "Mr. Secretary Cecil" felt that the welfare of the nation and of the land were identical, and bade the House of Commons remember that "whosoever doth not maintain the plough, destroys the Kingdom." He was right, for seventeenth-century England was still an agricultural country; even at the close of the period, Gregory King estimated that out of a total population of 5,500,000, only 1,400,000 dwelt in towns.

The general interest in farming was not due merely to the pre-eminence of the industry, but was also the

outcome of the agrarian revolution of the Tudor period. This great economic evolution, beginning in the fourteenth century, and extending into the nineteenth, was slowly changing the whole system of English tillage from a mediæval to a modern economy, and inevitably provoked bitter opposition. In the "Utopia," and in Latimer's sermons, is expressed the thought of an inarticulate peasantry, which watched, with a growing resentment and a complete lack of comprehension, the great fields of mediæval England, with their tiny strips and rough green baulks, give place to the more manageable enclosures of modern agriculture.

A modern authority estimates the number of men thrown out of employment by enclosures from 1455 to 1637 at 34,000, and he considers the proportion small out of a total population of about three millions; but if the number was small, the bitterness was great and widespread. In the North, it helped to light the fires of the Pilgrimage of Grace, and led the Lincolnshire peasants to march with a plough on their banner, till Robert Aske exchanged it for the "Five Woundes of Christ"; later it flamed up again in Ket's rebellion in Norfolk and in sporadic risings in the Midlands, and throughout the sixteenth and succeeding centuries it inspired the vigorous denunciations of contemporary sermon and ballad.

The seventeenth century opens just as the fires of active resentment were dying down; for the moment the most acute stages of the revolution were over, and men could look back and survey the results more dispassionately. Thus the interest of the period lies in the ebb and flow of old and new, in the conflicting evidence as to enclosures, and in the endless variations in tenure and tillage.

It is only the townsman who can believe in sweeping definitions; the countryman, used to the infinite variety of Nature, delights in exceptions and clings to an anomaly. So in the seventeenth century, if on one manor the great mediæval field persisted with its scattered strips and common pasture, and its copyholders still paying their suit in the manorial court of an ancient family, five or ten miles away, all might be different; there a new landlord or an impoverished old one, moved by the high price of wool, or the depreciation in money, would have pushed his legal claims to the uttermost, and effected at one stroke the economic revolution of a century. So strong indeed, had been the inducement to convert land into pasture, that it took all the machinery of a Tudor despotism to prevent the laying down to grass of a whole countryside.

By the opening of the seventeenth century, conditions were more favourable to tillage. The price of wool, which had doubled in the middle of the sixteenth century, remained stationary, while that of corn rose; instead of being sold at 12*s.* 1*d.* a quarter, which was its price from 1564 to 1572, it fetched on an average 38*s.* 2*d.* during the first half of the century. The inevitable result was a new interest in agriculture; many men turned their grass lands back to tillage, and found the soil the better for its sabbath. Instead of measuring land in terms of political power, and the price of wool, they now began to view it more as rent and yield of crops.

Thus the race for land, which the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Tudor confiscations had inaugurated, still persisted; small men and great jostled each other in competition, the price of land rose steadily, and the legal documents of estates show that

lawyers and city merchants rivalled the nobility and the gentry in their eagerness to purchase land and found a county family. Smaller men, too, were buying; the husbandman and weaver devoted his savings to the purchase of a tiny farm, while the freeholder also watched the market, and, when times were good, rounded off his farm with another strip of land.

If some of the larger estates were being broken up, others were forming, and though the number of freeholders had diminished in the troubles of the previous century, they were still numerous, and in 1698 were estimated by Gregory King at 160,000 in number and worth £60 to £70 a year. Such men were the backbone of Cromwell's "Ironsides," shrewd and laborious, but with a certain culture, for their wills show that they possessed books and silver.

Henry Best, a Yorkshire farmer, who relates in his "Farming Book" that "he kept constantly five plowes going and milked 14 kyne," left precise directions for the care of his "greate silver beere bowle and a dozen of silver spoons," while other smallholders mention their linen sheets or their feather beds, and one Cornishman states in his will, "I bequeath to my son Arthur, the feather bed he now lyeth upon." As long as the price of corn kept up and harvests were good, the freeholder was prosperous, and he had the inestimable benefit of a secure legal title.

The tenant by copyhold or leasehold was rather less well off; leases were long, often for three lives, and he was not often illegally evicted, but, within the limits of the law, he could suffer much. Fines for the renewal of his lease or tenement could be arbitrarily raised, and Harrison, in his "Description of England," stated that "the landlords doubled, trebled, even seven times increased fines, driving the copyholders for

every trifle to lose and forfeit their tenure." Henry Best relates that when William Pinder "tooke the fower oxe gange of my Lord Haye, hee payd 60*l.* fine, and was made tenaunte to the farm for twenty-one yeares, paying to my Lord 40*s.* per annum till such time as the lease expired."

Though rack-renting was not uncommon, particularly among new landlords, yet there were many prosperous copyholders. "Now," said Sir Edward Coke, "copyholders stand upon a sure ground . . . they shake not at every sudden blast of wind, they eat, drinke and sleepe securely, only having a special care to perform carefully what duties and services . . . their tenure doth exact, and custom doth require"; in fact, as a rule, they were fairly well off, rents were generally low, or rose slowly, and their happy lot is summed up in a contemporary catch:

"A little farm well tild,
A little house well fild,
A little wife well wild,"

while in 1688 Gregory King estimated their numbers at 150,000, and their average income at £42 10*s.* a year.

The condition of the labourers is more difficult to ascertain, as it depended so much upon their individual landlord; there was no fixed rate for the rent of their cottages, and no security from enclosure of the common upon which they tethered the few beasts which made all the difference to them between poverty and wealth. Henry Best tells of cottages rented at 10*s.* a year, but "without soe much as a yard or any back belonging to them"; in fact, it is undeniable that the law requiring that four acres of land should go with each cottage was often a dead letter. Sometimes the village pasture was rented by graziers and butchers from the town.

A contemporary tract, "Depopulation Arraigned," says that "the poore labourers . . . whose tenements doe most consist of errable land are intercepted from renting any competent quantities of medowe or pasture, to maintaine their oxen and other cattell to keepe the plow."

Even harder was the lot of the many landless labourers; the State persisted in assuming that they all possessed the statutory four acres, and that their wages were merely supplementary, and consequently fixed them below the level of subsistence. In 1698, Gregory King admitted that the financial condition of the labourer was one of insolvency. It is not surprising; during the period in which a quarter of wheat had more than doubled in value, the labourers' wages had only risen on an average from 8*d*. a day to 1*s*.

Shortage of cottages was another very real grievance, for in spite of frequent proclamations from the State, many landlords refused to repair their cottages. "Is it not lawfull for me to do what I list with my owne, to pull or lett downe my owne house?" asks the "Covetous Man" in a contemporary pamphlet, and the writer concludes sadly, "Where every man is for himself, the Divell is for all."

Shortage of houses and low wages helped to perpetuate the patriarchal system by which the farmer boarded the unmarried men and maids in his employ, and in Henry Best's "Farming Book" we get a pleasant picture of this system, worked under good conditions.

It was a small community, the shrewd, kindly farmer, his wife and family, "fower men, two boyes, and two good lusty mayde servants," all lived together in the farm-house, and shared the work between them.

Their wages varied, the head man, who "could sowe, mowe, stacke, goe well with fower horses and was used to markettinge," received 5 marks, or £3 2*s.* 10*d.* a year, the boys 24*s.*, and the "mayde servants" from 18*s.* to 24*s.*

In harvest-time, Best hired free labourers as well, who slept in the barn at night, and were paid differently, mowers 10*d.* a day without meals, shearers 8*d.*, thatchers 10*d.*, haymakers 4*d.*, and women 6*d.* for pulling pease, and 4*d.* for raking hay—low wages, but the common rate in his locality. When the harvest was in, "all the worke-folke and their wives that helped them that harvest," met in the great barn for a harvest supper, such as Herrick would have enjoyed, "puddings, bacon or boyled beefe, flesh or apple pyes, and then cream brought in platters, and after all hotte cakes and ale."

Under a kindly farmer the system worked well, but it left the workman entirely dependent upon his employer, for by the Act of 1563 no servant could leave his parish to seek employment without having given his master legal notice, and obtained a certificate of his "lawfull departure" from the parish constable and "two honest householders." Such documents depended so much on the employer's recommendation, that when Henry Best hired his labourers at Martinmas at the public hirings, he always asked first whether the servant "bee set at liberty." Thus the immobility of agricultural labour, which had been one of the drawbacks of the mediæval system, lingered on long after its benefits had passed, and the reason lies in the attitude of the State towards the land.

Before the eyes of Tudor and Stuart legislators flitted always the spectre of a depopulated country-side

and a starving and riotous peasantry, and to prevent such a disaster, the State hindered the progress of enclosures, enacted that every cottager should have his four acres of land, ordered landlords to repair their cottages, and so hoped to avert pauperism, but at the same time rendered it inevitable, by fixing wages at a starvation level, and by forbidding men to seek more favourable conditions in new employment.

One great reform, however, the State effected, though not without opposition, and this was the draining of the Fens.

In the seventeenth century, from Lincolnshire to Suffolk, and south to Bedfordshire, there stretched a waste of waters, of which Wicken Fen, near Ely, is to-day the only remnant. In his "History of Imbanking and Draining," Dugdale describes "the Inconveniences of the Drownings," "the Aire nebulous, grosse and full of rotten harres, the Water putrid and muddy, the Earth spungy, unfast and boggie." Here and there the monotony was broken by islands, some, like Thorney and Crowland, famous for their abbeys; while farther south, above a waste of waters, rose triumphant the great tower of St. Etheldreda, of Ely, like some Watchman of the Fen.

In these islands lived a stubborn and independent people, clinging tenaciously to their commons of the waters, and eking out contentedly a precarious existence by fowling and fishing.

When James I, and later his son, set on foot the drainage of the Fens, and, with the help of the Dukes of Bedford, a Company of Adventurers, and the scientific aid of Cornelius Vermuyden and Dutch engineers, slowly transformed the "Drownings" into the rich black soil of the Bedford Level, they met with

stubborn resistance from the Fenmen, who several times rose in wild revolt, and in 1643, in the February rains, wrecked Vermuyden's careful work by pulling up the flood-gates, "divers persons standing by with muskets, and saying they would stay till the whole level were drowned."

This was no isolated case; riots were frequently suppressed by armed force, and most of the work of embankment and drainage had to be done over again at the Restoration. The attitude of the Fenmen is well illustrated in one of their "libellous songs" quoted by Dugdale:

"Come Brethren of the Water, and let us all assemble
To treat upon this matter, which makes us quake and tremble.
For we shall rue it if't be true that Fenns be undertaken,
And where we feed in Fen and Reed, they'l feed both Beef and Bacon.
Wherefore let us intreat our antient water Nurses,
To show their power so great as t'help to drain their purses,
And send us good old Captain Flood to lead us out to Battell,
Then two-penny Jack with Skates on 's back will drive out all this Cattell."

The drainage of the Fens is only one illustration of the new and scientific attitude towards agriculture, which characterized the seventeenth century. That quick curiosity of the Renaissance which prompted men to travel and explore, was now applied to the most primitive of all arts, the tillage of the soil.

Thomas Tusser, a versatile Elizabethan parson, had already given the impetus to a more scientific culture, while in Kent the growing of hops was developing along the lines advocated by Reynald Scote in his "Perfite Platforme of a Hoppe-Garden."

Under the Stuarts, Tusser's books were reprinted, and his work continued by Robert Child, Gabriel

Plattes, Gervase Markham, and Sir Richard Weston. These writers view enclosures as the necessary condition of good farming, and Child asks "whether Commons do not rather make poore by causing idlenesse than maintaine them?" In his "Large Letter concerning the Defects and Remedies of English Husbandry," Child deplored the ignorance of English farmers; some plough with wheels, some without; in some cases oxen still draw the plough, while with others the unfortunate horse is tied by the tail, as in Ireland. In Kent, Child had seen ploughs drawn by four, six, and twelve oxen, while one ingenious yeoman "had fastened two ploughs together very finely, by the which he plougheth two furrows at once one under another, and so stirreth up the land for 12 or 14 inches deep."

Other reforms Child advocated were manuring, new crops, such as flax, hemp, and mulberry trees, and better methods of stock-raising; he would have the pig kept cleanly, "for the Hog is the cleanliest of all creatures," and he cannot understand why farmers do not use the mule, "that strong and proud Beast," and the "Honest and Patient Asse," for they eat little and "will save poor men much labour." Finally, like Gabriel Plattes, Child saw in the invincible conservatism of the English farmer the chief obstacle to progress, and, like him, he recommended the erection of a "Colledge of Experiments," for "Gentlemen and Farmers do not meet to communicate secrets in this kind, but keep what they have communicated themselves or known from others."

Nothing is more remarkable than the widely diffused interest in the new farming, and it is the more deplorable, that just when it was developing, the Civil War descended upon the country-side, calling landlords,

A NEW INSTVCTION OF PLOWING AND SETTING OF CORNE, HANDLED IN MANNER OF A DIALOGVE

betweene a Ploughman and a *Scholler.*

Wherein is proued plainely that Plowing and Setting, is much more profitable and leſſe chargeable, than Plowing and Sowing.

By EDVVARD MAXEY. Gent.

He that withdraweth the Corne, the people will curſe him: but bleſſing ſhall be vpon the head of him that ſelleth Corne. Prou. 11. 26.

Imprinted at London by *Felix Kyngſton*, dwelling in Pater noſter Rowe, ouer againſt the ſigne of the Checker. 1601.

AN AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT

Title-page of Tract by Edward Maxey. 1601. British Museum

yeomen, and labourers away from their farms, and bringing in its train confiscation and loss, the break-up of estates, and the cessation of all experiment.

If England escaped the deliberate pillage which contemporary Germany suffered in a war waged largely by mercenaries, yet she felt the inevitable wastage of civil strife, and in the case of the Royalists defeat meant sequestration, costly lawsuits, loss of rents, heavy mortgages, and the alienation of those farms which had been part of a mediæval heritage, or the more recent acquisitions of a thrifty Tudor grandparent.

Again, when estates were sequestrated, many men feared to take lease of these farms for more than a short term of years. In Cornwall, only discharged Parliamentary soldiers would take up the tenements from the local committee of sequestrators, for there was a general feeling of insecurity—the French might land and the king return. In any case, the difficulty of extracting rent from a hostile tenantry was great, and the neglected soil needed capital expended on it to make it profitable.

Thus the seventeenth century falls sharply into two periods, before the war and after. The first is an age of experiment; the second of reaction, and then of very slow recovery from the disintegrating effects of war. It was not till the close of the century that agriculture recovered the lost ground.

During this latter period, the attitude of the State remained much the same; it steadily encouraged the landed interest, confirming its title to recent acquisitions in 1660, freeing it from obsolete feudal incidents and prohibiting the export of corn in its favour, while at the same time, by the Settlement Acts, it prevented any increased mobility of agricultural labour.

Finally, with the Revolution, which a territorial aristocracy, backed by national approval, had effected, the landed interest became still more powerful; once again land and political power were synonymous terms, and, in the writings of Locke, men found a reasoned defence of their most cherished idol, the individual ownership of the land, for property now found itself elevated into a natural right.

The seventeenth century marks the triumph of private property, and the belief in it is just as characteristic of small men as of great; in fact, during the Civil War, it was the fear that their homesteads would be plundered which led the peasant farmers in the south and west to band themselves into groups of "Clubmen," and, with scythes and rakes as their weapons, set out to defend their holdings from both Parliamentarian and Royalist. Such men understood little, if anything, of the deeper issues of the war; they rose from the primitive desire to defend their homes, and they showed a certain tenacity, for though Cromwell wished to disperse them by persuasion, he was obliged to use force to dislodge them from their encampments in that triple ring of ancient earthworks, which crowns the heights of Hambledon Hill, near Shaftesbury.

The only man to preach communism, it is significant to note, was no countryman, but an unsuccessful London tradesman, Gerrard Winstanley, who led his followers on to the rough common of St. George's Hill, in Surrey, and there declared that "the Earth must be freed from entanglement of Lords and Landlords to become a Common Treasury for all," and so began to dig and plant in order to fulfil literally the Scriptural injunction, "to make beautiful the waste places of the earth."

Like Traherne, Winstanley felt himself the "heir

of all the ages"; it seemed to him utterly wrong that "a few covetous proud men" should "bag and barn up the Treasures of the Earth from others." So he bade men forget their particular interests and that saying, "This is mine," which he thought the root of all evil. Men were to live in a new brotherliness, "working together and eating bread together, neither giving hire or taking hire," and it is significant that the last verse of the "Diggers' Song" concludes:

"To conquer them by love, come in now, come in now,
To conquer them by love, come in now,
To conquer them by love, at it does you behove,
For Hee is King above, noe power is like to love,
Glory heere, Diggers all."

Winstanley's experiment was doomed to failure, his followers were dispersed by soldiers, and his ideas found little support; inevitably so, because they ran counter to a far stronger sentiment, the passionate attachment of the ordinary Englishman to his land.

Thus, on the land, the seventeenth century ends as it began, with a general recognition of the supreme importance of tillage, and a strong belief in individual ownership. But a century had passed, once again an era of new and scientific farming was at hand, but it would bring with it the commercial standards of a modern economy, and with them much that was gracious and beautiful in the past would inevitably disappear.

CHAPTER II

THE COUNTRY SQUIRE

THERE is no figure more typical of the Stuart period than the country squire. He was the pivot on which turned the whole fabric of local government, while his name shines conspicuously in the lists of famous men: Falkland and Hampden, John Eliot and Bevill Grenville, Cromwell and Shaftesbury, all belonged to that class which is immortalized in the portrait of Sir Roger de Coverley and the paintings of Van Dyck and Lely.

Such men were essentially men of the shires; their homes were in the country, and when they sat in Parliament they only took lodgings for the session, and thankfully returned to their manor-houses when it ended.

To reconstruct their lives is comparatively easy; the materials for such a study are peculiarly abundant, and their manor-houses still exist. These were often a veritable palimpsest; a Norman tower, a Tudor gateway, and a fifteenth-century hall and kitchen would combine to form a harmony of singular charm, very different in its intimate beauty from the classical magnificence of the eighteenth century.

Generally the house was a series of quadrangles. Round the first, fronting the gateway, were built the dining-hall, the private chapel, and that beautiful

A Typical Stuart Manor

Hampton, Hertfordshire. Engraved by Joannes Kip. "Britannia Illustrata," 1720 Edition. British Museum

feature of Elizabethan and Stuart houses, the "Long Gallery," with its panelled walls and stone mullioned windows; and in the same block, the "withdrawing-room," the "winter and summer parlours," and above, the bedrooms for the family and its visitors.

Behind this quadrangle ran another and yet another, and around these were the kitchens, pantry, the brew-house, bake-house, laundry, and dairy, while over them were built long dormitories under low slooping roofs for a numerous retinue, for, as John Evelyn relates, his father kept "116 servants in liveries, every one liveried in green satin doublets."

The manor-house was thus a tiny colony; it brewed its own beer, baked its own bread, and, except for Eastern silks and spices and Turkey carpets, lived on the produce of the demesne.

Such houses contained a colony of relations. When the eldest son married, he brought back his girl-bride as a matter of course to his home, and often these manor-houses numbered a household of as many as sixty persons.

In the Middle Ages, men built their houses primarily for defence, but under the Stuarts the desire for beauty, which had led the Elizabethans to lighten their rooms with stately windows, and to carry off the smoke of their fires in tall and ornamental chimneys, was developing. Gilded leather, Eastern embroideries, French tapestries, marble mantelpieces, and silver and china of rare beauty, all these had a growing attraction for the country squire, while the patronage given by Charles I to Van Dyck set the fashion for family portraits. Beds, too, were elaborate. The bed built for James I, by the Earl of Dorset, at Knole, cost £8,000; and Celia Fiennes, in her "Rides through England on a Side-Saddle," frequently men-

tions the heavy canopies of gold and silver embroidery, while more formidable was that great black bed of the Verneys, which toured the country when a death in the family was imminent.

As a rule, these houses stood in their own parks. "Every gentleman of five hundred or a thousand pounds rent by the year," says Fynes Moryson in 1617, "hath a park for Deer enclosed with pales of wood for 2 or 3 miles compasse." But more recent was the interest in the garden or "pleasance" immediately around the house, and it was largely due to French and Italian influence.

When Henrietta Maria became Queen of England, she found it almost impossible to procure in England the shrubs and flowers she had loved in France, while at his Restoration one of Charles II's first actions was to send for French gardeners for Whitehall and Hampton Court. John Evelyn, who had seen rare gardens in France and Italy, was an authority on horticulture; he translated into English, "Le Jardinier français," in his "Sylva" he laid down the principles of forestry, and his diary is full of allusions to gardens. For instance, he notes that Beddington "is famous for the first orange-garden in England, being now overgrown trees . . . secured in winter with a wooden tabernacle and stove."

In the literature and memoirs of the period, the garden figures largely. "God Almighty first planted a garden," said Bacon, "and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures," and so he planned with loving detail and the zest of the born gardener, an ideal garden with rosemary and lavender, "roses of all kinds," and in spring "the yellow daffodil and the almond-tree in blossom."

Marvell's garden, with "its green thought in a

green shade," has an exquisite simplicity ; but much more elaborate are the gardens seen by Celia Fiennes in 1698, with their formal grottoes and cascades, which were now the fashion since Louis XIV's gardener "Le Notre" had visited the English Court.

Beyond the park lay the demesne and the farms and villages on the estate, and in the relations between the squire and his tenantry, much that was feudal still persisted. Sir Bevill Grenville, whose tenants loved him so much that they followed him devotedly in war, yet insisted that they should grind at his mill, while the language of Sir Simon d'Ewes, at a Court leet of his tenants at Lavenham, is almost mediæval ; he reminds them that their relation to him is a "three fold" tie, the "sacramental" one of loyalty, the "servile" one of traditional services due to him, and the "redital," or the payment of the rent into which many of these old obligations had been commuted.

In his description of his grandfather, Sir Simon paints a miniature of the best type of Stuart squire : "Sound and sure he was of his word, true and faithful to his friend, somewhat choleric, yet apt to forgive, cheerful in his journeys or at his meals, of a sound and deep judgment with a strong memory, giving good examples to his neighbours by his constant hospitality, earnest he was and sincere in the rightful cause of his client, pitiful in the relief of the distressed, and merciful to the poor."

Hospitality was one of the chief characteristics of the old-fashioned country squire. The Countess of Warwick relates how her husband insisted on five tables being laid daily in the hall for visitors and their retinue ; but much of this lavish hospitality disappeared as a taste for luxury and a life at Court became more common, and in contemporary ballads there are fre-

quent lamentations over the change in the character of the gentry, the most famous being that of "the Old Courtier of the Queen's":

"With an old song made by an old aged pate,
Of an old gentleman that had an old wealthy estate,
Who kept an old house at an old bountiful rate
And an old porter to relieve poor people at his gate,
Like an old Courtier of the Queen's
And the Queen's old Courtier."

But very different is his son:

"With new titles purchased with his father's old gold,
For which many of his grandfather's old manors newly are sold,
And hath a new reason why housekeeping is grown so cold,
That is the new course that most of our gallants do hold,
Like a new Courtier of the King's
And the King's new Courtier."

A spendthrift or absentee squire was a real loss to the country-side, since the gentry were essential to the efficiency of local government. To prepare him for those innumerable duties which the Tudors had flung upon the shoulders of the local Justice, the country squire received a preliminary training in the local grammar-school, the university, and the Inns of Court, while to complete his education he had a year of travel on the Continent. Then he married, brought home his wife, and assisted his father in the management of the estate, and so acquired that detailed knowledge of local problems which was invaluable to him later, while to amuse him there was hunting, hawking, horse-racing, cards, the lute and the viol.

It was the fashion of the satirists to despise the country squire. "He is a clown of rank and degree," writes Samuel Butler; "his homely education has rendered him a native only of his own soil and a

foreigner to all other places, the custom of being the best man in his own territories has made him the worst everywhere else." "He assumes the upper end of the table at an ale-house as his birthright. . . . The chief points he treats on are the memoirs of his dogs and horses," while "he has old family stories and jests that fell to him with the estate."

Even more bitter, because not intentionally ironical, is Mary Astell's description: "His Conversation is wholly taken up with his Horses, his Dogs and Hawks, his Entertainment is Stale Beer, and the History of his Dogs and Horse," while at Quarter Sessions "he says little, eats and drinks much, and after dinner Hunts over the last Chace and so rides worshipfully Drunk home again."

Such descriptions depict the country squire as a boor, but from his letters and his library we should judge him to be possessed often of a pleasant culture. When Sir Simon d'Ewes made his will in 1639, he left to his male heirs "my precious Library, in which I have stored up for divers years past, with great care, cost, and industry, divers originals and autographs, ancient coins of gold, silver, and brass, manuscripts or written books. And it is my inviolable injunction that he keep it intire, and not sell it nor divide or dissipate it, neither would I have it locked up from furthering the public good, but all lovers of learning, of known virtue and integrity, might have access to it at seasonable times."

Clarendon has immortalized Falkland's home at Great Tew, where, "as to a university in a purer air," men like Hales and Chillingworth resorted, while Sir Bevill Grenville made Stow "a veritable academy of learning" for the education of his neighbours' children in Cornwall.

Nor are these isolated cases ; many country squires appreciated learning. Their books show that Theology and History, Law and Medicine, were their main interests, but on their shelves we also find herbals, treatises on astrology, and the " Art of War."

In fact, the frequent references to classical history and literature which adorn their letters and speeches, together with the excellent libraries which many of them collected, dispose of the accusation that they were men without culture.

If Mary Astell scorned the intellectual attainments of the country squire, she also does scant justice to his public services. As Justice of the Peace, the country squire represented law and order in his parish ; with a fellow-Justice he held Petty Sessions, confiscated flesh killed in Lent, suppressed vagrants and disorderly ale-houses, hunted out witches and recusants, and generally endeavoured to maintain the peace, while after the Restoration, when, to buttress up the woollen trade, the State ordered all men " to be buried in woollen," he added to his other duties the hearing of affidavits that the law had been complied with.

Once a quarter he rode to Quarter Sessions, receiving four shillings a day for his expenses, and there heard more serious cases of felony and sedition, assessed the rate of local wages, administered Acts of Parliament and Royal Ordinances, and supervised the activities of the Sheriff, the High Constable, and the Surveyors of the Highways.

To all these multifarious duties he brought a practical knowledge of the law, a genuine administrative capacity, and a decidedly conservative temper. Did the village parson introduce innovations in ceremony, or some curious sect insist on preaching on the green to the annoyance of the public, the Justice could

be relied upon to interfere; but on the whole his rule was just, and not often biased by political or religious prejudice. Indeed, there were many Justices who hesitated to sign warrants for the arrest of their recusant neighbours, and the constant complaints that the penal laws were not enforced are a testimony to the humanity of the Justice.

Among those who frequently felt the weight of the Justice's authority were the members of the Society of Friends, whose unauthorized "Meetings" he was legally required to suppress, while their constant interruptions in the "steeple-houses" brought them before him as disturbers of the peace. In these numerous encounters, which are recorded in the letters of the early Quakers, we see the Justices as men confronted by people whom it was their duty to arrest, whose doctrines they found quite unintelligible, and who proved peculiarly difficult to try in a court of law; for they would take no oath, nor accept bail, nor pay a fine, and they often also irritated the Justice into severity, by what he regarded as discourtesy, the refusal to uncover before the Bench.

On the whole, therefore, the verdict of history must be given in the Justice's favour, and as an unpaid and amateur administrator, he compares favourably with his contemporaries, the Intendants of Louis XIV.

In the wider life of the nation the country gentry also played an active part, and the leaders of the constitutional struggle are nearly all of this class. The country squire was not one of a caste. He might be noble, but his children were commoners, and his younger son often an apprentice to some city merchant; and the result was that the width of his interests, and the practical knowledge of human nature and of administration which his multifarious duties gave

him, rendered him peculiarly qualified to take his share in the great struggles of the period, while the Civil War brought to the surface the strength of character and the capacity for self-sacrifice which the unimpressive exterior of an English country gentleman had concealed.

The war was one of ideals ; nothing less was at stake than the fundamental issue as to where sovereignty resided in Church and State. On each side men took up arms as for a crusade, so that if the war broke the friendships of a lifetime, as in the case of Waller and Hopton, if it shattered the unity of families like the Verneys, it also brought to light unsuspected qualities in many men, changing Cromwell from a quiet country squire into " My Lord Protector," and Blake from a landsman into the Admiral of the Fleet.

The effects of the war on the economic position of the landed gentry have been already noted in the previous chapter, but the war also resulted in a change in their character. After 1660, they represent the victorious party in the State, embittered by its exile from power under the Interregnum ; they become more politically minded, less national in their outlook, while they soon learn to realize their importance in party politics, and Shaftesbury's organization of his party, and his " Green-Ribbon clubs," helped to turn the nationally minded squire of 1642 into the Whig or Tory of the Revolution.

Another change, too, must be noted—the later Stuart gentry are more worldly-wise than their fathers ; they frequented the Court much more, and they lost much of the single-mindedness of their ancestors. Nothing is more instructive than to study the different types of faces in some family portrait gallery of the period. The Jacobean has still in his face something of the

"spacious days of Elizabeth," and we are not surprised to learn that he was Vice-Admiral of the Coast and a terror to pirates. His son, the knight of the Civil War painted by Van Dyck, is more richly dressed, though the general effect is of a richness in simplicity; but the most striking thing in the portrait is the tragic dignity of his face and the signs of spiritual conflict in it. Surely it is not just a trick of the brush, or the sensibility of the artist, but rather the shadow of tragedy and that recognition of the mutability of life which was characteristic of the time. When we turn to the later portraits, that by Lely of the courtier of the Restoration, we see a face in which complacency and worldly wisdom are blended with family pride, but in which all trace of any spiritual quality is lacking.

And the judgment of the portraits is a just one, for the essential difference between the earlier and the later Stuart gentry is that the former were primarily religious men, while the latter too often put worldly considerations first. After the Restoration, that deep personal piety which had given strength to many a man who would have disowned the name of Puritan, was replaced by the rigid orthodoxy of a triumphant ecclesiasticism, and it must be admitted that the piety of a Sir Roger de Coverley is impressive just because it is an anachronism. In short, we have exchanged Hampden for Halifax.

CHAPTER III

STUART WOMEN

IF the seventeenth-century country squire is primarily associated with its politics, his wife is enshrined in its literature and art. When we think of Stuart women, instinctively we recollect some portrait by Van Dyck in an old English manor-house, a letter of Dorothy Osborne's, or a lyric of Herrick's, and we see them clearly, gay and quick-witted, yet with a beauty touched with fragility, for the artist has made their charm as poignant as it is undeniable, while the poet gives the same hint of impermanence.

> "You are a tulip seen to-day,
> But, dearest, of so short a stay
> That where you grew scarce man can say.
>
> "You are a lovely July-flower,
> Yet one rude wind or ruffling shower
> Will force you hence, and in an hour."

Neither poet nor artist gives the whole of the picture: these women who appear so fragile were really both independent and capable; they were regarded by their husbands as partners and given a degree of liberty which every foreigner regarded as extraordinary, and caused a Dutch traveller to remark, "England is the Paradise of married women."

It is all the more striking that this should be so when the conditions under which marriages were

arranged are remembered, for they were essentially a matter of estates and settlements, and the parent who declared "I mean to marry my daughter to £2,000 a year" is typical of many. Almost invariably the parents made all the arrangements, and generally the daughter acquiesced, for usually she was a girl still in her teens, and brought up to expect her parents to choose her husband for her. Often, in the case of heiresses in the Court of Wards, the negotiations for their marriage began when they were still in the nursery; for instance, Mary Blackwell was only eleven years old when her unscrupulous guardian arranged her marriage with his son, "the licence was had, the wedding apparel bought and the priest ready," and it was only the unexpected arrival of the other trustee which prevented the marriage.

After the Civil War, when estates had depreciated, parents found it increasingly difficult to provide their daughters with adequate dowries. "There are so many merchants' daughters," wrote Sir William Morice, Secretary of State in 1661, to his brother-in-law, Edmund Prideaux, "that weigh so many thousands that ours are commodityes lying on our hands, who cannot sett them off with so greate weight," while, to add to the difficulty, the daughters were equally unwilling to marry in poverty. "I would have you know," wrote Mary Villiers to one suitor, "without an estate, I will never marry you nor no man living."

Though marriages were so much a matter of settlements, they generally turned out well; it is true we find one strong-minded lady writing, "I married three times, never with entire satisfaction," but cases of cruelty and desertion were infrequent, and against them we have to put Sir Bevill Grenville's tribute to his wife: "She hath ever drawne so evenly in her yoke

with me as she hath never prest before or hung back and behind me, nor ever opposed to or resisted my will, and yet truly I have not in this or anything else endevored to walk in the way of power with her, but of reason, and though her love will submitt to either, yet truly my respect will not suffer me to urge her with power unless I can convince by reason."

Perhaps more attractive are the high-spirited girls who declined to accept their parents' choice for them ; Mary Boyle, for instance, the daughter of the Earl of Cork, who at fourteen absolutely refused to marry a certain " Mr. James Hamilton." " My aversion for him was extraordinary," she writes. " I could never be brought by fair means or foul to it."

Equally determined was Dorothy Osborne, of Chicksands, and although the family estates were impoverished by the war, her father's health failing, and her mother dead, she steadily refused the numerous suitors provided for her by her brother. " I am certain," she writes to her lover Temple, " I could not love the most perfect person in the world unless I did first believe he had a passion for me." In short, she scorned a conventional marriage, for beneath the gaiety and delicate wit which illuminate her letters was a fine sincerity, and great strength of character.

There were other women, too, for whom marriage meant passion, not estates, and one of the most attractive of these is Anne Harrison. As a girl, she tells us she " was wild to that degree which we graver people call a hoyting girl," but when she was seventeen civil war broke out, and she fled with her family from London to Oxford with the Court, and there she met and married Richard Fanshawe, Secretary of War to the Prince of Wales. He was seventeen years her senior, but their love for each other was instinctive and

passionate. "We never had but one mind throughout our lives," writes Anne. "Our souls were wrapped up in each other, our loves one and our resentments one." Such love defied defeat and exile. Not even after Worcester, when Richard was a prisoner in London, and Anne hiding in a mean lodging near Charing Cross, was their spirit broken. They contrived a meeting, and Richard's greeting was, "This is the chance of war, nothing venture nothing have, so let us sit down and be merry whilst we may."

One main reason for the happiness of such marriages was the active part taken by Stuart women in their management of their households and estates. In the previous chapter we have shown that the Stuart manor-house was a veritable colony of relations and servants, to preside over which was obviously no sinecure; while the fact that it was also practically self-sufficient economically, only added to the labours of the housewife, for, as a contemporary wedding sermon puts it, "if she will have Bread, she must not always buy it, but she must sow it and reap it and grind it; if she will have Cloth, she begins at the Seed, she carrieth the Seed into the Ground, she gathereth Flax, of her Flax she spinneth a Thread, of her Thread she weaveth Cloth, and so she comes by her Coat."

Such women did not consider cooking derogatory, and their quaint receipt books, with their elaborate menus of "a Swan roast," with "numerous Sallets and devised Paste," show us that they liked their food rich and highly spiced, that their midday meal was long and elaborate, their supper comparatively light, and afternoon tea non-existent, for even after the Restoration, when tea became fashionable, it was drunk alone and not as part of a meal.

Coffee, too, only slowly became common. It was

not until 1656 that Anthony a Wood turned into the apothecary's house near All Souls College to sample the new drink, which an advertisement described as "a simple Innocent thing, incomparable good for those that are troubled with melancholy."

When the preparations for the daily meal were complete, the housewife would gather round her her daughters and her maids to spin, weave, and embroider, for it was a period when there was a general desire to beautify the home, and while the country squire was laying out a garden after the Italian manner, his wife was embroidering rich silk covers for chairs, or elaborate canopies for the great carved bedstead.

Embroidery, too, was used freely on dresses. Under James I, the tight, stiff bodice and ruff and the cumbersome bell-shaped farthingale had been worn, but with Charles I the fashions gave place to the wide, falling collar of exquisite lace and the full, loose skirts with which the portraits of Van Dyck have made us familiar; while from Hollar's contemporary engravings we can supply other details—pearls twisted through the hair, masks and hoods for the streets, and embroidered gloves. If the lines were simpler, the general effect was rich, so that the contrast was the greater when the Puritan woman fashioned her collar of plain fine linen and wore a gown which in its bare simplicity was a tacit protest against the vanity of the world. With the Restoration, dress led the way in the general reaction with a riot of colour and a general tendency to over-elaboration, until at the close of the century women wore towering lace head-dresses above their stiff curls of powdered hair, kilted up their full skirts to show the brocaded petticoat, and indicated their political sympathies by the most fantastic patches.

For many women, however, dress was obliged to be

A Stuart Lady in the time of Charles I.
Engraving by Hollar. "Ornatu Muliebris Anglicanus," 1640. Bodleian Library

a minor interest, for their time was fully occupied not only with the general supervision of the household, but with the rearing of children and the care of the sick. One has only to consult the genealogical tables of a few typical families, or the brief entries in a parish register, to realize that, if many children were born, comparatively few survived, not through neglect, but through ignorance, for it was only in cases of grave danger that a "chirurgeon" was summoned, and every housewife prided herself on being able to make and apply simple remedies, and in some cases to set a limb.

Some women undoubtedly attained considerable skill. Mrs. Hutchinson tells how her mother, Lady Apsley, tended the prisoners in the Tower, while she herself, during the siege of Nottingham, dressed the wounds of friend and enemy most successfully with "her excellent balsams and plasters."

Nor did such women confine their ministrations to their households; on the contrary, so closely was the manor-house linked to the village that the lady of the manor felt a direct responsibility for the sick and poor in the neighbourhood. John Duncon, the chaplain of the Lady Lettice Falkland at Great Tew, describes "her mercifulness towards the sick," "her provision of Antidotes against Infection and Cordials," "her frequent visiting of the poorest Cottagers," and "her ready service to them on their sick-bed."

There was need enough of such charity, for there was much poverty, and when we turn to the lives of working women of the time, we see that they were most laborious; not only did they work in the fields pulling pease and reaping, but they also helped with thatching and carried mortar for the mason, while in their spare time they were obliged to supplement the family income by spinning yarn for the clothier in the nearest town,

for wages were fixed by the local Justices below the level of subsistence, and on the comfortable but entirely erroneous supposition that every labourer had his holding of at least four acres of land.

Faced by poverty, the wives of labourers were happy when they found a friend in the lady of the manor; and often this was the case, for the majority of Stuart women not only had a strong sense of their duty towards their tenantry, but took an active part in the management of the estate. Such a woman was the wife of Peter Heylin, of whom it is recorded that "she was a discreet and active lady, who looked both after her Housewifery within doors and the Husbandry without." Nor is she an exception; there were many women like Sarah Fell, who kept careful account not only of her household expenditure, but also of farm expenses and investments, while there are numerous cases of widows who carried on their husband's business and traded successfully in their own names.

Marriage in these conditions was a real partnership, and when the Civil War came, the value of such a training became evident, for women of almost every class rose to the emergency, and in the absence of their husbands carried on the business or the estate, supervised the sowing and the harvest, and gathered in the rents as far as was possible. "I am grieved with all my heart," writes Lady Harley to her son, "that the tenants doo not pay theare rents that I might send it to your father." Often, too, women were obliged to share in actual warfare. Lady Harley defended her house successfully from the Royalists, while the resistance put up by the Countess of Derby at Lathom House was so heroic that the Parliamentarians said: "Three women ruined the kingdom, Eve, the Queen, and the Countess of Derby."

Poorer women, too, showed the same spirit. Some served as spies and messengers, others both in London and Gloucester dug trenches, and in the siege of Lyme helped to man them; while on the Parliamentarian side we find women of the middle classes forming committees in London, Coventry, and Norwich to collect plate and jewels for the Mint, and shoes and stockings for the Army.

In that finer spirit, too, which can meet the losses of war with courage, Stuart women were not lacking. When Colonel Hutchinson bade his wife "not to grieve at the common rate of desolate women" for him, he was relying upon a Roman strength of character which did not fail her; and the same "magnanimity" is seen in the words of Lady Fairfax, when Sir Thomas died in battle: "She grieved not that he dyed in this cause, but that he dyed so soon to doe no more for it."

"War," said Bentham, "is mischief on a large scale." And he was right, but it is doubtful if without the Civil War we should have realized the fine spirit and the administrative ability of Stuart women.

After the war came the inevitable reaction; women slipped back into the domestic routine from which they had been so rudely shaken, and with the general decline in morality of the Restoration, the conception of women changed, and for the worse; they are expected to be helpless, and gradually they become so. Certainly it is significant that the two most outspoken protests against the limitations of women's education come at the end of the century, and after the war.

Mary Astell, a woman of considerable scholarship and great strength of character, greatly resented the disabilities of women, and in her "Defence of the Female Sex" (1697) blames men for them. "They have endeavoured," she writes, "to train us up alto-

gether to Ease and Ignorance." And the same indictment is brought by Defoe in his "Essay on Projects": "Does she plague us with her pride and impertinence? Why did we not let her learn that she might have had more wit?"

Both writers sought a remedy in schemes for the higher education of women, but while Defoe's college "should differ but little from the public schools," and should be a place where "those willing to study should have all the advantages to learning suitable to their genius," Mary Astell's academy was to serve also as a "retreat" for "those ladies who, nauseating the parade of the world, might here find a happy retreat from the noise and hurry of it." Besides opportunities for learning, there were to be services "after the Cathedral manner," but the Protestantism of Bishop Burnet took affright even at this mildly religious element, and the scheme was dropped.

It was a pity, as such an institution would have met a real need, for there were some women, like the delightful Margaret Blagg at the Court of Charles II, who, amidst all its immorality, contrived to make virtue "a cheerful thing, lovely as herself," and yet seriously contemplated retirement to a Protestant nunnery in Holland, while others who did not feel in the same way a vocation to the religious life, sometimes shrank from marriage, and would have welcomed such a retreat as the Church had originally provided, and of which Little Gidding is the sole example since the Dissolution.

It is equally clear that there were many women who had a genuine pleasure in learning, for although there is nothing in England like the "Hôtel Rambouillet," with its brilliant group of literary women, there is

more intellectual activity than is sometimes suspected. Like her husband, the country squire, the lady of the manor was primarily interested in history and theology; she not only listened attentively to sermons, but read them for pleasure, and the memoirs of women like Mary Countess of Warwick and Brilliana Lady Harley show that their theological reading was considerable. Other women, like Dorothy Osborne, liked lighter fare, and read the voluminous romances of Mademoiselle de Scudéry; while Nancy Denton, Sir Ralph Verney's goddaughter, greatly desired to learn Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and was much disappointed when her godfather replied: "Good sweetheart, bee not soe covetous; beleeve me a Bible with ye Common Prayer and a good plaine cattechisme in your Mother Tongue being well read and practised, is well worth all the rest and much more suitable to your sex."

Sir Ralph's attitude is typical, but, in spite of such discouragements, some women succeeded in reaching a very fair level of scholarship. Mrs. Hutchinson read Latin for pleasure, and spent so much of her time before her marriage in study that men reported her a "she-wit," while Elizabeth Lady Falkland studied Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, and Hebrew. Less well known is Eliza Elstob, the sister of a London parson, who carried on a literary correspondence with learned men, which is preserved to-day in the Bodleian Library, and transcribed Anglo-Saxon homilies from manuscripts lent to her by the University of Cambridge.

When we turn to the literature of the period, we find women among its poets and dramatists. At first their tone is rather apologetic, and Mary Oxlie is typical of their attitude when she writes:

" Perfection in a woman's work is rare ;
From an untroubled mind should verses flow ;
My discontents make mine too muddy show ;
And hoarse encumbrances of household care ;
Where these remaine, the Muses ne'er repaire."

Such women often hid their identity behind a tantalizing anonymity, like the writer of the little poem, " To my husband," which for its quaintness and charm deserves quotation :

" When from the world I shall be ta'en,
And from earth's necessary pain,
Then let no blacks be worn for me,
Not in a ring, my dear, by thee.
But this bright diamond, let it be
Worn in rememberance of me.
And when it sparkles in your eye,
Think 'tis my shadow passeth by.
For, why, more bright you shall me see,
Than that or any gem can be."

But there is no timidity about the three greatest literary women of the century, Margaret Duchess of Newcastle, Aphra Behn, and Katherine Philips, " the Matchless Orinda."

Of Margaret Duchess of Newcastle, Pepys declared : " The whole story of this lady is a romance." She was first Maid of Honour to Henrietta Maria, then the wife of one of the greatest nobles and the most luckless of Royalist generals, and finally, as " the Mad Duchess," she lived to amuse the Restoration with her learning and her oddities. One of her plays, " The Humorous Lovers," is described by Pepys as " the most ridiculous thing that ever was wrote, yet she and her Lord mightily pleased with it," and it must be admitted that her dramatic power was slight, and her sense of humour even less. Yet here and there, both in her plays and poems, she shows genuine poetic

feeling and justifies her claim: "I am a legitimate poetical child of Nature, and though my poems, which are the body of the poetical soul, are not so beautiful and pleasing as the rest of her poetical children's bodies are, yet I am nevertheless her child, though but a brownet." In spite of her affectations, the duchess had a root sincerity, and it is this which gives her life of her husband its value, for history it can never be, as every judgment is prejudiced by the writer's wifely affection.

In Aphra Behn we have a very different personality, a woman who was the first to make literature her profession; one who fought her way by sheer ability to an equality among Restoration dramatists. Left a widow before she was thirty, poor and without influence, for twenty years she wrote and worked like a man, fighting her way among her rivals, and, it must be admitted, writing with a coarseness equal to theirs, yet, none the less, she deserves to be remembered, for if many of her plays are unreadable, yet they contain passages which show a lyrical power, and a vitality which is almost Elizabethan.

There is a world of difference between Aphra Behn and "the Matchless Orinda." Aphra Behn was a struggling artist, entirely dependent on native wit; Katherine Philips, on the other hand, was the wife of a placid and comfortable country squire, who acquiesced peaceably in his wife's literary aspirations and provided her with the means for pursuing them. In the little circle of literary ladies which "Orinda" gathered round her, there is a good deal of sentimentality and affectation, and one is apt to forget that, in spite of her absurdities, she possessed a genuine love of poetry and a certain dramatic power, for her translation of Corneille's "Pompëé" was played in Dublin with such

great success that the writer was welcomed at Court by all the literary society of the day. Then when she was at the height of her fame, she died suddenly of small-pox at the age of thirty-four, for, to use her own words :

> " Death is a leveller ; beauty and kings,
> And conquerors, and all those glorious things,
> Are tumbled to their graves in one rude heap,
> Like common dust as quiet and as cheap."

If these three women won for themselves a place in the world of letters on equal terms, it cannot be claimed for them that they raised the general status of women ; on the contrary, it is undeniable that the inequality between the sexes is more emphasized after the Restoration than before, and certainly the women of the latter half of the century compare unfavourably in general vigour with their grandmothers.

Only among the Society of Friends do we find a full recognition of the equality of the sexes ; there women spoke under the Divine guidance as freely as men, and took a prominent part also in its organization and missionary enterprise. When we see how Sarah Fell held the threads of the Society's organization in her capable hands, when we read of Mary Fisher, who, at the age of twenty-five, felt a " concern " to preach to the Sultan, and actually succeeded in doing so, we realize the great potentiality in Stuart women, and we regret all the more the general decline in their opportunities, for Gervase Markham's picture of the ideal Englishwoman is not far from the truth—" chaste in thought, of stout courage, witty, pleasant, constant in friendship, wise in discourse but not frequent therein, quicke of speeche but not bitter or talkative, secret in affaires and comfortable in counsels."

CHAPTER IV

STUART CHILDREN

IT is one of the most attractive features of the seventeenth century that it had a genuine love for children.

In Spain, Velazquez delighted in painting the Spanish royal children. Two of his finest pictures are those of the nine-year-old prince Balthasar Carlos, riding his spirited horse gallantly over a wide stretch of mountain and valley ; and the study of an interior in the Court at Madrid, with the fair little Infanta Margaret in her white satin hooped dress, standing with her absurd air of childish dignity among her maids of honour, while two ugly dwarfs and a large mastiff occupy the foreground of the picture.

In England, also, we have numerous portraits of Stuart children. Van Dyck's group of the children of Charles I is well known, and so is Honthorst's picture of the Duke of Buckingham, his wife and his two children; while in every old English country house we find similar paintings of children. All have much the same characteristics; the children are men and women in miniature, the boys with hose and doublet like their fathers, the girls with their soft satin skirts just touching the ground, their hair looped back with ribbon or threaded pearls, round their slender necks wide falling collars of lace as rich as that

which adorned their mothers, while with both the expression on their faces is as demure and dignified as their dress.

In Stuart literature children find as large a place, as in its art; their early deaths, which were lamentably common, furnish a theme congenial to the sensibility of the poet.

> "Weep with me, all you that read
> This little story;
> And know for whom a tear you shed
> Death's self is sorry.
> 'Twas a child that so did thrive
> In grace and feature,
> As Heaven and Nature seem'd to strive
> Which owned the creature."

So wrote Ben Jonson in the opening lines of his brief elegy, "On Salathiel Pavy, a Child of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel," while from Herrick we have the quiet little epitaph "Upon a Child that died":

> "Here she lies, a pretty bud,
> Lately made of flesh and blood;
> Who as soon fell fast asleep
> As her little eyes did peep.
> Give her strewings, but not stir
> The earth that lightly covers her."

Many poets felt the attraction of children, but none excels Traherne in his study of the wonder of childhood. Like Vaughan, he anticipated Wordsworth in thinking "our Birth is but a sleep and a forgetting," and his description of infancy is a development of the same thought, in prose which is almost lyrical in quality.

"All appeared new and strange at first, inexpressibly rare and delightful and beautiful. I was a little stranger, which at my entrance into the

world was saluted and surrounded with innumerable joys. My knowledge was Divine."

"The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious as gold: the gates were at first the end of the world. The Men! O what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem. Boys and girls tumbling in the street and playing were moving jewels. The city seemed to stand in Eden, or to be built in Heaven. The streets were mine, the temple was mine, the people were mine, as much as their sparkling eyes, fair skins and ruddy faces." But, alas, the wonder was transitory and the light faded." With much ado I was corrupted and made to learn the dirty devices of this world," for the grown-ups "did impose upon me and obtrude their gifts that made me believe a ribbon or a feather curious."

Traherne stands alone in his delineation of the mind of a child, but not in his love of children, for Stuart parents were remarkable for their affection, and Misson, in 1698, when he visited England, commented upon it as extraordinary: "On a une extraordinaire complaisance en Angleterre pour les jeune Enfants, toujours caresser, toujours applaudir, à ce qu'ils font." So we find that Strafford, the formidable Lord Deputy, but the most loving of fathers, was wrapped up in his children, and when Nan and little Arabella are staying with their grandmother, he writes delightful letters about them: "Wherever they are my Prayers shall attend them"; "Nan, they tell me, dances prettily, and Arabella is a small practitioner that way also," but he wishes her French accent were better, and he hopes her grandmother will remedy it.

Another very lovable father was Endymion Porter, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Charles I. When his eldest son George was born, he wrote to his wife: "My Sweet Love,—Believe me that I love George for having such a mother." And again: "God bless thy child and make him a Saint George," "The Lord bless little George and give him grace to be good and virtuous." When the second son, Charles, succeeded his brother, the father, who was then with the Prince of Wales in Madrid, inquires: "Send me word how the children do, and whether Charles be black or fair," and a little later he dispatches "six little glass bottles with silver chaines for little George, and I make no doubt he will keep a terrible stir with them," and asks: "I pray you send me word whether he hath ever a great tooth yet or no, and how many teeth little Charles hath." Endymion Porter must have inherited his love of children from his mother, who was certainly a most delightful grandmother. She writes to her son: "I wish you could see me sitting at the table with my little children, one on either side; in all my life I have not had such an occupation to my content to see them in bed at night and get them up in the morning; the little one is exactly like what you were of the age."

Few men loved their children more than Charles I, and he felt the full bitterness of his fate when he bade them farewell before his execution. The Princess Elizabeth, who was then just thirteen, he entrusted with messages to her mother, "that his thoughts had never strayed from her, and that his love should be the same to the last," and begged the child not to grieve so much; while to the ten-year-old Duke of Gloucester he said: "Sweetheart, now they will cut off my head, and perhaps make thee a King, but mark what I say, you must not be a King as long as

HORNBYES HORNBOOK.

Iudge not too raſhly, till through all you looke;
If nothing there doth pleaſe you, burne the Booke.

By *William Hornbye*, Gent.

London,
Printed by *Aug. Math.* for *Thomas Bayly*, and are to be ſold at his ſhop in the middle Row neere Staple Inn. 1622.

THE USE OF THE HORN-BOOK

Title-page of Tract by William Hornbye. 1622. British Museum

your brothers Charles and James do live, for they will cut off your brothers' heads when they can catch them, and cut off thy head too at the last, and therefore I charge thee not to be made a King," to which the child replied passionately, "I will sooner be torn in pieces first."

Undoubtedly Stuart parents loved their children greatly, but they seldom spoilt them, and even tiny children were whipped often. "I would have you . . . not beat him overmuch," writes Endymion Porter to his wife, of little George, and the same advice is given by Lady Denton about Edmund Verney when he was only three: "Let me begge of you and his mother that nobody whip him but Mr. Parry (his tutor); if you doe goe a violent way with him, you will be the first that will rue it, for i veryly believe he will reseve ingery by it, he is of a gentil sweet nature, sone corrected."

While still in the nursery, children learnt the alphabet from a horn-book, on which the letters were printed above and the Lord's Prayer below. But very quickly other lessons followed, and we are often appalled at the precocity of quite tiny children, especially of Richard Evelyn, who, we are not surprised to hear, "died of six fits of a quartan ague," at the age of five; for at "two and a half years," says his father, "he could read perfectly any of the English, Latin, French, or Gothic letters, pronouncing the three first languages exactly," while at the age of five he was "making congruous syntax," and "had a strong passion for Greek."

Much of the early training of children was severely religious in character, for many thought with Milton, "the end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright," and so

childish faults were magnified into grave sins, and the result was a moral precocity in some children which was deplorable. One is not attracted by Mrs. Hutchinson's account of herself as a child : " Play among other children I despised, and when I was forced to entertain such as came to visit me, I tired them with more grave instructions than their mothers." It is almost a relief to hear that she also pulled their dolls to pieces. Sensitive children were apt to become morbidly introspective. When Nicholas Ferrar was six years old, " in extreme grief, he rose at midnight, cold and frosty, and went down to a grass-plat in the garden, where he stood long time sad and pensive . . . thinking seriously upon the grave doubt which thus perplexed him. At length, throwing himself upon the ground and spreading out his hands, he cried aloud : ' Yes, there is, there must be a God, and He no question, if I duly and earnestly seek it of Him, will teach me not only how to know but how to serve Him acceptably. He will be with me all my life here, and at the end thereof will make me happy.' "

Much more ordinary children were the two little daughters of Lord Weymouth, who were the great friends of Bishop Ken, and for whom he wrote many little poems, such as the following :

FAN. Dear Molly, say what shall we teach
Our Brother when he aims at speech ?

"MOLL. Dear Fan, it must be our first task
To teach him blessing how to ask.

"FAN. No, Molly, we our Parents dear
Next to great God must still revere,
God ought to tincture first his thought
As we, you know, at first were taught.

"MOLL. We'll make it, Fanny, then our Care,
To teach him first our Saviour's prayer.

"FAN. No, Molly, that's too long as yet,
We'll teach him well by heart to get
'Glory to God,' and soon he'll try,
Blessing to ask, like you and I."

Other poems written for children include Herrick's "Child's Grace":

"Here a little child I stand,
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat and on us all. Amen."

While in Matthew Prior's delightful letter to "Lady Margaret Cavendish Holles-Harley, when a Child," we get the whole duty of a good little girl:

"My noble, lovely, little Peggy,
Let this my First Epistle beg ye,
At dawn of morn, and close of even,
To lift your hands and heart to Heaven.
In double duty say your prayer:
Our Father first, then Notre Père,
And, dearest child, along the day
In every thing you do and say,
Obey and please my lord and lady,
So God shall love and angels aid ye.

"If to these precepts you attend,
No second letter need I send,
And so I rest your constant friend."

As soon as the children outgrew the nursery, they were either taught at home by the family chaplain, or a tutor, or, if they were boys, sent to Eton or the local grammar-school. The private tutor was not always a success. Mrs. Hutchinson describes the family instructor as "a pitiful dull fellow," and both Locke and Peacham agree that parents were often unwilling to spend the money on securing men of good qualifi-

cations, though, as Locke said, "it is not good husbandry to make his (the child's) fortune rich and his mind poor."

In the seventeenth century there were numerous grammar-schools; in fact, in 1581 Mulcaster thought there were too many, as, since the Reformation, he saw fewer openings for scholars.

Many of these schools, indeed the majority, were of ecclesiastical origin, choir schools and chantry schools, but others had been founded or endowed by individual laymen or rich merchant gilds. All, however, were still intimately connected with the Church; every schoolmaster had to be licensed by the bishop, and the school prayers and punctual attendance at church on Sundays and saints' days figure largely in foundation statutes.

At Eton, in 1635, Robert Boyle rose at 5.30 a.m. winter and summer, and "soe to schoole for prayers," while ten years later Provost Rous put the hour for rising half an hour earlier, saying "that scholars were to rise in the Long Chamber at five of the clocke in the morning, and after a psalm sung and prayers heard, sweep the chamber as they were wont to do," while on Sundays they attended service twice and wrote out the sermon afterwards.

From this punctual attendance at church and the systematic reading of the Bible at school and family prayers, it resulted that the average Englishman knew his Bible intimately; its rhythmical prose moulded his daily speech, and his mind became a storehouse of its song and history. "When the Bible was read," says Traherne, "my spirit was present in other ages. I saw the light and splendour of them: the land of Canaan, the Israelites entering into it, the glory of the Amorites, the long prosperity of their kings, their

milk and honey, their slaughter and destruction, with the joys and triumphs of God's people, all which entered into me and God among them."

If this systematic religious instruction was in many ways good, it bore hardly on those who could not conform to the teaching of the Church, which was an integral part of it. Roman Catholics had to teach their children by stealth at home, or defy the law by sending them abroad to be educated; while Protestant Nonconformists were at almost as great a disadvantage, and were eventually obliged, like the Society of Friends, to found their own schools.

The curriculum in every type of school was still severely classical; the aim of the master was to teach his boys first to speak Latin, and then to write it, and whether he employed the old way of continual repetition of Lily's Grammar, or the newer method of Comenius of simple dialogues relating to common objects, the end was the same, to make the boy fluent in the language, which was essential to the scholar and the diplomat, and almost equally so to the traveller.

Rhetoric was still important. "There can scarce be a greater defect in a gentleman," says Locke, "not to express himself well either in speaking or writing." So declamations were recited at school prize-days, and we have only to read the speeches of the average member of Parliament to realize that the schools succeeded in their aim. The average gentleman spoke easily in Latin, and the frequent quotations with which he ornamented his letters and his orations sprung naturally to his lips, while the form of his sentences is often as classical as the vocabulary.

Latin occupied the first place in the school time-table, but Greek and Hebrew frequently followed it, Mathematics and Science being given a subordinate

place, and the study of English, in spite of Mulcaster's insistence on its importance, neglected. It is all the more interesting that Peacham, in his "Compleat Gentleman," bids Mr. William Howard "labour to get the habit of a good stile, in English as well as in Latin," and advises him to read Sir Thomas More's "Richard III," Sidney's "Arcadia," and the works of Bacon and Hooker.

In noblemen's houses and in courtly schools much stress was also laid on music and singing, dancing, riding and fencing, and on the inculcation of good manners and a fine courtesy; even in the grammar-schools, where little time was given to recreation and physical culture, and where Locke's prescription for children of "plenty of open-air exercise and sleep" was badly needed, reverence for parents and fit courtesies were insisted on, as we see in Coote's poem, "The Schoole Master to his Scholler":

"First I command thee God to serve,
Then to thy parents duty yeeld,
Unto all men be courteous
And manerly in town and field.

"Your clothes unbuttoned do not use,
Let not your hose ungartered be,
Have handkerchief in readinesse,
Wash hands and face or see not me.

"Wherefore, my child, behave thyselfe,
So decently in all assayes,
That thou maist purchase parents' love,
And eke obtaine thy master's praise."

In almost every school floggings were common, and there was need enough of Locke's plea that reasoning "is the true way of dealing with children," and that their curiosity should be encouraged, for it is "an appetite after knowledge."

In the case of girls, as we have noticed already in a previous chapter, there was little hope of their desire for an education more like that of their brothers being realized, for if some women, like Elizabeth Lady Falkland and Mrs. Hutchinson, succeeded in learning several languages, and in becoming thoroughly well educated, the majority of girls, whether at home or in the boarding schools, which become more numerous in the latter half of the century, had their studies restricted to Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, French, Needlework, Music, Drawing, and Dancing, and the schemes of Defoe and Mary Astell for their higher education were destined to wait nearly two centuries for fulfilment.

For the children of the poor there was some provision for the teaching of the "three R's," in those "Petty Schools" in which an illiterate dame or schoolmaster, for a mere pittance, prepared pupils to go on to the grammar-school. There were also endowed local schools, in which the children of the town were educated freely, and many merchant gilds insisted on the apprentice being taught to read and write. But, none the less, most poor children remained illiterate, for, with wages so low, the parents were obliged to put their children to work in the fields or to spin, at the time when they should have been in the schoolroom. In fact, then, as since, when wages were low, education suffered.

On the whole, the pauper child was better educated, for after the foundation of charity schools, at the close of the century, by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, destitute children were clothed, fed, taught the "three R's" and the Catechism, and apprenticed on leaving school to a useful trade, and though the founders of such schools have a piety

of an irritating complacency, yet it is undeniable that they rescued many children who must otherwise have drifted into disease or crime.

It is a far cry from the courtly children painted by Van Dyck to the charity children, listening to sermons on "Contentedness in a Low Condition," but both have their place in a study of Stuart children. Not in the seventeenth century, nor since, unfortunately, has that vision of Christendom been realized in which Traherne saw all the children happy, and where

> "Beneath the lofty Trees,
> I saw, of all Degrees,
> Folk calmly sitting in their doors; while som
> Did standing with them kindly talk,
> Som smile, som sing, or what was done
> Observ, while others by did walk;
> They view'd the Boys
> And Girls their Joys,
> The Streets adorning with their Angel-faces,
> Themselves diverting in those pleasant Places."

CHAPTER V

THE COUNTRY PARSON

CHAUCER pictured his ideal parish priest as "the poore persoun" of the town, but in the seventeenth century we instinctively look for him in the country, in some village church like Herbert's at Bemerton, or in that parsonage at Dean-Prior which Herrick described with such loving minuteness.

"Lord, Thou hast given me a cell,
Wherein to dwell;
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather proof;
Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry;

* * * * *

"Like as my parlour, so my hall
And kitchen's small;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin,
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipt, unflead;
Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it."

Herrick's case is not exceptional; the stately rectories from which the younger son of the local baronet rode to hounds and entertained the country-side belong

more to the eighteenth century than to the seventeenth, when the parson was generally regarded as socially inferior to the squire; it was only later that there came the union of common interests and family ties. In fact, for a man of noble birth to seek ordination was exceptional, and when George Herbert at last decided to leave "the painted pleasures of a court life" for the priesthood, his friends told him it "was too mean an employment and too much below his birth and the excellent abilities and endowments of his mind," and were surprised when he replied: "It hath been formerly judged that the domestic servants of the King of Heaven should be of the noblest families on earth, and though the iniquity of the late times have made Clergymen meanly valued, and the sacred name of priest contemptible, yet I will labour to make it honourable, by consecrating all my learning and all my poor abilities to advance the glory of that God that gave them."

Even lower than the status of the parish priest was that of the private chaplain in some noble family, for if there were some who, like Sir Roger de Coverley's chaplain, "lived in the family rather as a relation than as a dependent," there were many more whose position approximated to that described in Oldham's satire.

"Some think themselves exalted to the sky,
If they light in some noble family,
Diet, a horse and thirty pounds a year,
Besides the advantage of his lordship's ear.
Little the inexperienced wretch does know
What slavery he oft must undergo,
Who, though in silken scarf and cassock dressed,
Wears but a gayer livery at best.
When dinner calls, the implement must wait,
With holy words to consecrate the meat,
But hold it for a favour seldom known,
If he be deigned the honour to sit down."

If there were some wealthy benefices, there were many poor ones. Misson, who visited England in 1698, says: "Plusieurs ont assez, Peu ont trop, Beaucoup ont trop peu." £100 per annum is a common income, so that as contemporary records show that clerical families were generally large, we are not surprised to find Bishop Burnet writing: "I set myself to encourage my clergy not only by going about among them and by assisting them kindly in all their concerns, but by a large share of my income with which I have relieved their necessities."

Again, the parson's income was often as uncertain as it was small; tithes were unpopular, and many men agreed with John Selden, "'tis ridiculous to say the Tythes are God's part and therefore the clergy must have them," and the result was that unless the parson were on good terms with his flock, the great tithe-barn would stand empty.

Glebe, too, was not always profitable to men who were primarily scholars or townsmen, ignorant of farming, and it was not every country parson who could say with Herrick:

> "Lord, 'tis Thy plenty dropping hand
> That soils my land,
> And givest me for my bushel sown
> Twice ten for one."

Then, as now, the ideal country parson was a countryman by birth, one who was interested in his glebe and garden and in the customs of the village, for, as Burnet told his clergy, "the parson's friends and his garden ought to be his chief diversions, as his study and his parish . . . his chief employment."

In the seventeenth century the parson stood for much more in the village than his spiritual functions,

for he was a necessary link in the chain of local government by which the Tudors had united Crown and parish. So when the village constable had caught the "sturdy beggar" or the "arrant rogue," and the Justice of the Peace had ordered a whipping, it was the parson who saw that the sentence was executed, and signed the certificate with which the delinquent was dispatched to his birthplace. Again, it was the parson who had to supervise and stimulate the activities of the churchwardens. Every Easter he called the parish meeting in the church at which they were elected, and he was responsible if they misapplied the parish moneys, neglected the poor, or allowed the fabric of the church to fall into decay. In short, the parson was no isolated figure in the life of the village, but one who bore his full share of the burdens of the community, with this result, that there was no sharp line between the lay and the clerical; the church was the natural meeting-place of the parish, and there men discussed the repair of the highway or the whipping of a vagabond without any sense of inappropriateness.

The churchwardens' accounts show the same promiscuity. In those of the parish of Camborne, Cornwall, we find such a variety of items as "1684, paid Francis Hocking for 2 days mending Gwithyan Bridge, 2*s.* 6*d.*"; "1678, pd for expense at the Spirituall Courte being summond there for the Ile windows not being in repairation, 1*s.* 0*d.*"; "1705, pd for distressed maidens going to Ireland, 6*d.*"; and such cheerful items as "1698, beer at the ringing night, 1*d.*," and "3*s.* pd for expence when the Bishops were left out of the Tower, 1685."

In recompense for his numerous duties, the parson had the sense that he was an intimate part of the

village community, and if he were wise, he looked kindly on its traditions. George Herbert said "the country parson should be a lover of old customs if they be good and harmless, and the rather because country people are much addicted to them, so that to favour them therein is to win their hearts," and this he did at Bemerton, so that his people "did so love and reverence Mr. Herbert that they would let their plough rest when Mr. Herbert's saint's bell rung to prayers, that they might also offer their devotions to God with him, and would then return back to their plough."

Herbert's interest in his people was the fruit of his saintliness, but Herrick's pleasure in country festivities was of a much more human character, and it is with a perfectly natural enjoyment that he writes:

> "Come, Anthea, let us two
> Go to feast, as others do:
> Tarts and custards, creams and cakes,
> Are the junkets still at wakes;
> Morris-dancers thou shalt see,
> Marian too, in pageantry."

If there were much that was good in a system by which the parson shared so intimately in the life of the parish, there was also the danger that the spiritual side of his life would be sacrificed to the material, and it is clear that this was often the case. It was these shortcomings that Laud hunted down with such tireless energy; here he found a church utterly neglected, its walls crumbling, its services slovenly, while in the next parish the squire rode regularly to hounds through the churchyard, and, when the living fell vacant, calmly moved his fences to appropriate a few more feet of the glebe. Graver offences, too, Laud found,

drunkenness and immorality, sometimes practised by the clergy themselves, more often connived at in their flock, and against all these abuses he set his face, and if his reforms were not always effected with much tact, yet it is to them that we owe many of our parish churches, for he insisted on repairs, and devoted to the purpose the numerous fines which he caused to be levied, on the separatist who stayed away from church, the farmer who hoarded his corn in time of dearth, and the landlord who failed to repair his cottages.

More, too, Laud accomplished, for he brought back to the church "the beauty of holiness," and insisted that the east end should be railed in, the altar covered with a fair cloth, and approached with reverence. It was in the same spirit that Herbert repaired the church at Bemerton, and that Nicholas Ferrar's mother beautified the neglected fabric at Little Gidding, first wainscoting the walls and relaying the floor, and then hanging the benches "with blue taffety," while "she adorned the Communion Table with carpet of blue silk embroidered with gold, and covered the floor of the chancel with sky-coloured silk."

With the repair of the church went hand in hand a greater order in its worship. The surplice "that rag of Anti-Christ," as the Puritans called it, was made obligatory, services held more frequently, and irreverence punished, while the clerk, the beadle, and the sexton were stirred into activity. Of the three, the clerk was the most important; he wore a surplice, occupied a desk beneath the pulpit, and led the responses and the singing. "Thou mayest conceive, O Reader," says the parish clerk in Arbuthnot's satire, "with what concern I perceived the Eyes of the Congregation fixed upon me when I first took my Place at the Feet of the Priest. When I raised the

NEVVES FROM IPSWICH:

Diſcovering certaine late deteſtable practices of ſome dominiering Lordly Prelates, to undermine the eſtabliſhed Doctrine and Diſcipline of our Church, extirpate all Orthodox ſincere Preachers and preaching of Gods Word, uſher in Popery, Superſtition and Idolatry.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Woe be unto the Paſtors that deſtroy and ſcatter the ſheep of my Flocke, ſaith the Lord. Ierem. 23. 1.

Firſt printed at Ipſwich, and now reprinted for *T. Bates.* 1641.

A Typical Puritan Tract

Title-page of Tract. 1641. Bodleian Library

Psalm, how did my Voice quaver for Fear. Notwithstanding which it was my God Hap to acquit myself to the good liking of the Congregation, but the Lord forbid that I should glory therein." The sexton and the beadle were less important; the sexton cleaned the church and dug the graves, while the beadle chased dogs and unruly persons out of church, and on week-days assisted his friend the constable in catching rogues.

It would be a mistake, however, to depict the seventeenth-century parish as peaceful; on the contrary, it reflected in miniature the fierce political and religious controversies which swept the country, for it must be admitted that if real reforms were effected by Laud, it was often with but scant consideration for his opponents. Unfortunately, Laud confused unity with uniformity; he never realized that there is a "beauty of holiness," though of a very different type from Anglicanism, in the sheer severity of Puritanism, while even more disastrous was his failure to perceive how strongly rooted in the English character was its intense individualism, its hatred of Rome, and its nervousness of ceremony; and when to this obtuseness he added a still more fatal belief in the union between Church and State, he precipitated that conflict between authority and individualism which the Renaissance and the Reformation had rendered inevitable.

So the seventeenth-century parish was often a troubled place. Here the parson refused to wear the surplice or to restrict his prayers to the liturgy, and so had been silenced by the Court of High Commission and a stranger unused to country ways put in his place; there the vicar followed the new ways, and restored ceremonies which his flock regarded as "innovations in religion." Such a man was Mr. Robert

Dove, of Ilsington, whose parishioners complained in 1640, "that the Communion table was turned altar wise by Mr. Dove and by the parishioners turned about 3 tymes, and as often sett altar wise again by Mr. Dove or his orders, and that he preacheth that who so putts on his hatt in the Church, service or no service, he will punish him."

Behind such disputes lay not only theological differences, but a complete diversity of temperament, and it is this which made the gulf between Puritan and Anglican impassable, for, as Selden says, "Religion is like the Fashion, one man wears his Doublet slashed, another laced, another plain, but every man has a Doublet, so every man has his Religion, we differ about Trimmings." Many of the controversies centred, too, on the relation between the sacraments and the sermon; the Anglican laid the emphasis on the priest, the Puritan on the preacher, for in the seventeenth century the "English nation was a people of one book, and that book the Bible," and they never wearied of hearing it expounded. To-day we read with a smile of that Sunday when Bishop Burnet "had preached out the hour-glass, he held it aloft in his hand and then turned it for another hour, upon which the audience set up almost a shout for joy." But our forefathers were made of sterner stuff, and had an infinite capacity for listening.

It was this pleasure in hearing the Word expounded, and also the delight of the individual in giving his own interpretation of it, which led to the foundation of numerous lectureships and endowed sermons in city and town churches, and it was the same tendency which prompted the preaching of Independents and Anabaptists. On the other hand, the Anglican threw the emphasis more upon the recital of the liturgy and

the administration of the sacraments than on sermons. For instance, at Little Gidding, that home of the Ferrars of "reverent discipline and religious fear," so beloved by Crashaw, Nicholas Ferrar planned the day's routine for his community of forty persons, so that there was an almost unbroken service of prayer, the household taking it in turn to watch all night in the church, while by day at regular intervals they met for worship and recited the Psalter. Yet Little Gidding was "no house of mourning," for its master "had ever an air of sweetness and cheerfulness in his very aspect," and the nephews and nieces who shared his retirement were unfettered by vows and could leave it if they chose. Nor was the life monotonous, for Ferrar took care to provide his family with varied occupations: singing, bookbinding, the compilation of Scriptural harmonies, the recitation of dialogues, and the care of the sick and poor—all had their place in the day's routine, while over all brooded the serenity and purity of its master, so that when Edward Lenton visited the household he experienced that irresistible attraction which Shorthouse has depicted so vividly in "John Inglesant."

But the peace of Little Gidding was destined to be short-lived, for from the strife between the historical and corporate view of the Church and a highly individualistic conception of religion, from the fatal alliance between Church and State, and from the inevitable clash of warring temperaments, arose that conflagration of the Civil War, which swept away in its train the peace of the parish.

Early in the war, up at Westminster, a Puritan House of Commons enacted that clergy convicted of Royalism or scandalous behaviour should be ejected from their benefices. Then came ordinances thick and

fast—that the deprived minister should be allowed to retain a dole of a fifth of his former stipend, that he should not be allowed to teach or preach, that a Presbyterian minister approved by a Board of Tryers should replace him, and that all images of a superstitious nature should be removed from the church.

It was all very perplexing to the average villager. If some in the parish rejoiced when cold white glass replaced the warm radiance of mediæval "painted windows," and when the ancient cross at the four roads was shivered to fragments, there were others who disliked the "removal of the ancient landmarks," and felt nothing but repugnance for unfamiliar prayers, the cold formalism of civil marriages, and a stranger in the parsonage.

Presbyterianism, too, had a Scotch flavour which few appreciated; its theology men did not mind, for Predestination was a pleasant theme, and, as Selden said, "to preach long and loud and Damnation is the way to be cryed up. We love a Man that Damns us and we run after him agáin to save us." But the discipline of the kirk was another matter; it never gripped the English parish; to quote Baxter, "it was but a stranger here."

Presbyterianism might be the Established Church under the Commonwealth, but in every tiny village an infinite variety of worship was to be found. Here an ejected Anglican secretly administered the sacraments in some Royalist manor-house, there the Quaker preached on the village green, while in some ancient barn the Independent "opened out the Word." So much variety was perplexing, especially when the Fifth Monarchy Men asserted that the end of the world drew nigh, and many men were glad when the

Restoration brought back the familiar liturgy, for they were tired of eccentricity.

Yet, none the less, they grieved sincerely when once again they witnessed the pitiful ejectment of the minister and his family, this time for Presbyterianism or other nonconformity, and in this case without even the bare pittance which the Commonwealth had flung to the Anglican.

It is difficult to measure suffering, and impossible to estimate whether Anglican or Presbyterian endured the more, but the story of the two ejectments is much the same. It is the tale of men mostly pious and often scholarly, who, because they would not forsake their principles, were flung with their families on the cold charity of a hostile world.

The loss was not entirely theirs. If the Church gained in uniformity, she lost in fervour; she became too closely identified with a victorious political party, and the persecution of the Quakers and Nonconformists brought discredit on her. Saintly men like Ken, energetic reformers like Burnet, and learned prelates of the type of Sancroft and Tillotson, the Church of the Restoration could boast of, but in the country-side the standard of clerical piety, as well as of public morality, steadily declined, until out of the general apathy and the growing rationalism emerged the Toleration Act of 1690, which reluctantly admitted that the battle for uniformity had been lost.

Such are some of the outstanding religious changes mirrored in the life of the English village, but they are only a part of its story, for the ecclesiastical history of the country-side is as full of anomalies as its system of land tenure, and if we are to understand it rightly, we must avoid sweeping generalities and be prepared for exceptions.

So there were parishes like Kilmanton, in Wiltshire, where the same minister, a gentle and scholarly person, lived unharmed through all the upheaval of war, for when he was summoned before the local Parliamentary Committee, and reluctantly left his books to attend it, he was "given a pint of wine, great prayse, and told to go home and feare nothing." At Sharnbrook, too, in Bedfordshire, the ejected vicar seems to have lived on in the village, keeping carefully his Latin register of the births and deaths in the parish, until at the Restoration he bound it up in the volume in which "Geoffrey Woodham, Taylor," an honest man of the parish, had recorded the same events in the vulgar tongue during the troubled years of the Interregnum.

It is not surprising, for the strength of the English parish is its individuality, and in its anomalies lies its charm.

CHAPTER VI

THE UNIVERSITY

THE seventeenth century was an age which justly appreciated learning, for the spirit of the Renaissance, with its delight in scholarship and its quick curiosity, was still potent, while beside it existed also that reverence for antiquity which was so fundamental a part of the English character.

Again, Stuart men and women did not make Metternich's mistake of despising ideas as "vague unsubstantial things"; on the contrary, they knew that the really interesting things in life were Politics and Theology, theories of Church and State, and so the Universities, as the makers of opinion, were recognized as of supreme importance in the national life.

This general respect for learning was tempered, however, with the conviction that knowledge needed to be fused with experience. "Great Reading," said Halifax, "without applying it, is like Corn heaped, that is not stored, it groweth musty," and so fathers, who had made sacrifices to send their sons to the university, considered the "Grand Tour" and the "Inns of Court," which followed it, equally necessary, for "the Down-Right Scholar," said John Earle, is one "who has much learning in the ore unsought and untried, which time or experience fashions and refines."

This desire for a life wider than that of the scholar

was felt strongly by George Herbert; even after a brilliant career at Cambridge, culminating in his appointment as Public Orator, he wrote:

"Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
The way that takes the town:
Thou didst betray me to a lingering book,
And wrapt me in a gown:
I was entangled in a world of strife,
Before I had the power to change my life.

"Now I am here, what Thou wilt do with me
None of my books will show,
I read and sigh, and wish I were a tree,
For then sure I should grow
To fruit or shade, at least some bird would trust
Her household with me, and I would be just."

In the seventeenth century, life at Oxford or Cambridge was very like that of to-day. There was the same College system, which had gradually replaced the looser organization of the Middle Ages, and yearly it grew stronger. The position of head of a college became increasingly important, for the colleges were expanding and new ones being founded. When Laud was President of St. John's, he built a new quadrangle, and in 1612 Dorothy Wadham founded Wadham College.

With the expansion of the colleges, rivalry between them increased. Humphrey Prideaux, Student of Christ Church, has not a good word for Balliol. "There is," he writes to John Ellis, "over Balliol College a dingy, horrid, scandalous ale-house. Here the Balliol men continually and by perpetuall bubbeing add art to their natural stupidity to make themselves perfect sots"; while Anthony à Wood, as a Merton man, thinks New College badly needs reforming, so much was it "given to drinking and gaming and

OXFORD IN THE TIME OF CHARLES I.

Engraving by Hollar. Bodleian Library

vaine brutish pleasures, so that they degenerate in learning."

Then, as now, the tutorial system was the very essence of the University, but as undergraduates came up at the age of fourteen or fifteen, the tutor's functions were more varied than they fortunately are to-day. Then, he not only read with his pupils, and was responsible for their moral welfare, but he kept their money, paid their fees, and bought their clothes. When Brilliana Lady Harley had a son, Edward, at Queen's College, she writes to him: "If your tutor doth not intend to bye you silke stockens, to weare with your silke shute, send me word, and I will bestow a peare on you." And in another letter: "I am so unwilling that you should goe to any place without your worthy Tutor, that I send the messenger expressly to your Tutor, with a letter to entreate him that you may have the happinesse of his company wheather soever you goe, your father by no means would have you goe any wheather without him."

The undergraduates' dress was a matter of constant regulation. Not only must they wear their cap and gown for academic occasions, and at night, but they must dress soberly and eschew love-locks and other vanities. When Edmund Verney went up to Oxford in 1636, he wrote home to his father: "Oxford and my Tutour I lyke very well. The Vice-Chancellor spoke to me very courteously when I came to be matriculated, as he could not find fault with my Hair, because I had cut it before I went to him." And when the Bishop of Winchester sent commissioners to "visit" Magdalen and New Colleges in 1674, he bade them inquire whether "any of the Scholars weare pantaloons or periwigs."

After the Restoration, the University found it increasingly difficult to control the students' dress.

Anthony à Wood declared that the "men swash it in apparel," and that "even the theologians ride abroad in grey coats with swords by their sides."

Amusements, too, were regulated. The undergraduate must not frequent ale-houses or taverns, or play marbles on the steps of the Senate-house; he must eschew cock-fights and bull-baiting. All these regulations were constantly broken. Sir Simon d'Ewes declared that at Cambridge, in 1620, there was "swearing and drinking, rioting and hatred of all piety and virtue." At Oxford, too, there had been considerable laxity till Archbishop Bancroft became Chancellor in 1608, when he told the Vice-Chancellor and the Proctors: "I doe require you to be very severe and strict both in enquiring after and observing such persons and misdemeanours, as also most sharply to punish the offenders in this kind." The work of reformation was continued by Laud, first as President of St. John's and then as Chancellor; he insisted on lectures being attended, chapels kept, and disputations performed, so that when John Evelyn went up to Balliol in 1637, he found "the University exceedingly regular under the exact discipline of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, then Chancellor."

In spite of Vice-Chancellors and Proctors, the seventeenth-century undergraduate undoubtedly enjoyed life. Not only were there "the dancing and vaulting schools," which John Evelyn patronized, and the exhilarating rows between "town and gown," but frequent performances of comedies and interludes. Evelyn enjoyed them, but Milton as an undergraduate was rather supercilious. "There while they acted and over-acted, among other young scholars, I was a spectator; they thought themselves gallant men, and I thought them fools; they made sport, and I laughed;

they mispronounced, and I misliked; and, to make up the Atticism, they wore out and I hissed."

In the academic life of the student there was much that was mediæval. Seven years must elapse before the undergraduate could become a Master of Arts; the Quadrivium and the Trivium were still the curriculum, Logic Grammar (both Greek and Latin), Philosophy, and Rhetoric for the first four years, and for the post-graduate, Theology, Philosophy, Ethics, Astronomy, Hebrew, and Perspective. In Mathematics, Oxford led the way. Wallis was Savilian Professor of Geometry under the Commonwealth, but it was not until 1661 that a Chair of Mathematics was founded at Cambridge. Examinations, too, were on the same pattern as in the days of Grosseteste and Duns Scotus; they still took the form of those public disputations in the schools of which the "viva" at Oxford is to-day the survival, and if at times they led to hair-splitting, at least they had the merit of training men to speak well and coherently, and to answer in debate, achievements which the modern system of written examinations does nothing to secure.

Then, as now, men's intellectual interests at the University were not bounded by the examination statutes. We find Sir Kenelm Digby and Laud furthering the study of Arabic by gifts of manuscripts to the Bodleian, while the "obliging and universally curious" Dr. Wilkins, of Wadham, is described by Evelyn as delighting in scientific experiments; he had "in his lodgings and gallery variety of shadows, dials, perspectives, and many other artificial, mathematical and magical curiosities," while the club he founded blossomed into the Royal Society.

Even more interesting was the group of men who used to ride out from Oxford to Falkland's home at

Great Tew—Hales and Chillingworth, Thomas Hobbes and Sidney Godolphin. Clarendon tells how they "dwelt with him as in a College situated in a purer air, so that his House was a University in a less Volume, whither they came not so much for Repose as Study; and to examine and refine those grosser Propositions which laziness and consent made current in vulgar Conversation."

At Cambridge, much the same problems were being debated by the little group of Cambridge Platonists—Benjamin Whichcote, Tutor of Emmanuel; John Smith, Fellow of Queens'; Nathaniel Culverwell, Fellow of Emmanuel—who taught their students to read Plato and Plotinus, and to reconcile Platonism with Christianity, for, as Whichcote said, "the Christian religion is intellectual, rational, and spiritual."

Poetry, too, claimed many men's interests. At Cambridge, Herbert was followed by Crashaw and Vaughan, and later by Milton; while at Oxford we have poets so various as Traherne and Lovelace, and such a general pleasure in poetry that when Bevill Grenville came up to Exeter, he neglected his formal studies "for the sweet delights of Poetry."

Almost greater interest was taken in music. All through the troublous years of the Interregnum in Oxford, a little musical society met regularly in the house of William Ellis, the former organist of St. John's, and there while the host played the lute, the viol, or the theorbo, Anthony à Wood "exercised his natural and insatiable genie for music on the violin." When the Protector visited Oxford, there was music and singing, for Oliver Cromwell "loved a good voice and instrumental music," and when James Quin had sung, he turned to him, saying, "Mr. Quin, you have done very well. What shall I do for you?" and so

restored him to the Studentship at Christ Church from which the Parliamentary Visitors had ejected him.

It would be erroneous to regard the universities as a quiet backwater during a peculiarly stormy period; on the contrary, they suffered severely all through the Civil War. Traditionally they were closely connected with the Crown, by numerous foundations and benefactions, and both Tudor and Stuart sovereigns had always been alive to the importance of controlling their opinions. Thus Elizabeth had taken a high hand in suppressing the Calvinism of Cartwright, the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and James I and his son were equally determined to check the growth of Puritanism.

It is not, then, surprising that when war was declared, both universities were for the king. Cambridge sent plate and money promptly to him at Nottingham, and would have done more had not Cromwell seized the city and converted it into one of the fortresses of the Eastern Association. During the Puritan ascendancy in Cambridge, the Royalists suffered severely; two hundred Fellows, who refused to take the Covenant, were expelled, others arrested on suspicion, and the colleges ransacked for plate and money; even the collection of ancient coins at St. John's College was plundered.

At Oxford, immediately war was declared, the University put itself into a state of defence. Scholars were drilled, "the Masters of Arts, yea Divines also, were served out with a pike," trenches dug in the "Newe Parks," and a barricade of timber thrown up on Magdalen Bridge. It was impossible to control the scholars; there were many like Anthony à Wood's brother Thomas, who "upon the first newes at Oxon that the armies were going to fight, left his gowne at the town's end and ran to Edgehill, did his Majestie

good service, and returned on horse well accoutred and afterwards was made an officer in the King's Army."

Even those who remained found life infinitely distracting. There were the drills in the parks, the constant excitement of seeing troops and trains of prisoners passing through the city, and when the Court took up its residence in Oxford, life became a mixture of gaiety and tragedy, for against the walls of Merton, where Henrietta Maria was entertained with masque and interlude, young Colonel Windebank was shot by court martial for unnecessarily surrendering Bletchington House to the enemy, though men said he did it at his wife's entreaty.

As the Royalist cause declined, life in Oxford grew more grey, and in June, 1646, City and University submitted to the Parliament, and all those who would not conform were ejected. Under the Puritan regime, the students changed in character; they were now "morose and factious," in Anthony à Wood's opinion. Lectures and examinations were resumed, but no theatricals or morris-dancing were permitted; swearing and drinking were punished with severity. There was more prayer and rigidity than in Laud's day, but there was less learning.

When the Restoration came, the organs were played again in college chapels, and there was general rejoicing, but little improvement intellectually, for Anthony à Wood declared that though some of the Cavaliers that were restored "were good scholars, the generality were dunces." Both at Oxford and Cambridge there was a general reaction from the rigours of Puritanism; students wore periwigs and ribbons, and preferred talking French and politics in the coffee-houses to attending lectures, while when the Court came to Oxford to avoid the Plague, all pretence of working

was abandoned and scholars "despised as pedants and pedagogical persons."

It was little wonder if the main interests of students were political. It was to Oxford that the Whigs rode armed to carry the Exclusion Bill, and there that Charles defied them; while in the next reign James II's arbitrary action in ejecting the Fellows of Magdalen focused public attention once more on the University. Feeling rose high in Oxford against the king. His actions had been autocratic in the extreme. He had rated the Magdalen dons like schoolboys, bidding "them avoid pride and learne the vertue of charitie and humilitie," while at the State banquet in Bodley's Library he preserved a haughty silence. "None did eat but he," says Anthony à Wood, "for he spake to nobody to eat," so that when he left, the hungry courtiers scrambled with the rabble of the town for food.

Yet there was not much love at the universities for William III. He was, as he knew, merely a disagreeable necessity. Certainly at Oxford, the majority of men still believed in Divine right, even if they lacked the moral courage and consistency to follow Sancroft into the ranks of the Non-Jurors.

Thus with all the controversies of the seventeenth century the universities were intimately associated, and perhaps suffered in being so, for it is possible that the stagnation in learning which characterized them in the eighteenth century was partly the result of that very cause of their vitality in the seventeenth, their lively interest in ideas and in the fundamental problems of Church and State.

Finally, it is necessary to emphasize that both Oxford and Cambridge were still mediæval in their attitude to the poor scholar. He was not merely tolerated, but

welcomed. There were many benefactions in college statutes reserved expressly for him, and by means of the institution of sizars at Cambridge and servitors at Oxford, he was able to supplement his scanty resources by attendance upon his richer companions. So when John Rashleigh came up to Gloucester Hall from Cornwall in 1638, he brought with him to wait upon him his cousin, Francis Penrose, but the two boys shared their studies equally, and accepted the relation between them quite naturally.

Thus the University was a mixture of elements old and new. In form and tradition it was still mediæval, but at the same time there was also stirring within it the new spirit of inquiry, the child of the Renaissance, and it is in the ebb and flow between the reverence for antiquity and the scientific spirit that the fascination of its history is to be found.

CHAPTER VII

THE COURT

THE life of a Court is like some miniature theatre on whose stage perform the little marionettes in their elaborate dress and with their air of grave importance. It is an artificial world, resting solely on the maintenance of the tradition of monarchy, and if it is to persist, every one in it must play his part with an air of reality; if this is lost, the whole structure, like some fairy city, disappears for ever.

In the seventeenth century the Court possessed this essential air of reality. At the centre stood the Stuart sovereign, believing absolutely in his royalty, and in his Divine right to it. "The state of monarchy is the supremest thing on earth," said James I, and so thought his son; while if Charles II was too shrewd to put the belief into words, he probably held it just as strongly as his grandfather or his brother.

Again, monarchy was a habit with the English nation; its traditions were rooted in the national character, for if Englishmen could look back, like Richard II, on kings deposed and slain, and if they were equally determined in the present to restrict the unbridled exercise of royal power, yet they liked the idea of monarchy, and so the Court rested not only on the personal theories of the king, but on the more stable foundation of English conservatism.

The Court must be maintained, but it never meant as much to the average Englishman as the Court of Louis XIV to the Frenchman. The Englishman liked to feel it was there ; it pleased his historical sense that the old ceremonies persisted, and he thoroughly enjoyed the pageants which monarchy entailed, for he was inquisitive and pleasure-loving, a true son of the Renaissance, but he never lost the conviction that the real life of England lay not in the Court, but in the Shires ; in fact, his local sentiment was stronger than his royalism.

Even in the Court itself, though men sought feverishly for places, it is doubtful if they were as self-deceived as the courtiers of Louis XIV ; they lived the artificial life, but never entirely accepted its standard of values. Bacon, a prince among courtiers, realized that the price of success at Court is bondage. " It is a strange desire to seek power and to lose liberty," he writes. " Men in great place are thrice servants, servants of the Sovereign, or State, Servants of Fame, and Servants of Business, so as they have no freedom, neither in their persone, nor in their actions, nor in their times."

Many men, too, realized that the moral atmosphere of the Court was injurious. If there were some fortunate individuals, like the first Duke of Buckingham, whose rise to power, says Clarendon, was " more a flight than a growth," there were many more who learnt the painful truth of Bacon's epigram, " All rising to great place is by a winding stair." It was a life in which most men were onlookers, while the few played the big parts, and Halifax summed it up well when he said: " The Court may be said to be a company of well-bred fashionable Beggars. A Man who will rise at Court must begin by creeping on all Fours ; a Place at

Court, like a Place in Heaven, is to be got by being much upon one's knees."

Such a life gave men false values. "A Huffing Courtier," says Samuel Butler, "is a Cypher, that has no value himself, but for the Place he stands in. All his Happiness consists in the Opinion he believes others have of it. His Business is only to be seen and he performs it with admirable Industry, looking wonderfully Politic and cautious whom he mixes withal."

This is only one aspect of the Court, and the most obvious and superficial. It must also be remembered that in the seventeenth century the Court was the Government; behind its trappings were determined the grim realities of war and peace, and it was the pivot on which turned the whole machinery of the State. In the long list of officials at the Court there is, therefore, a great diversity; some are the great administrative officers of the Crown, who still, as in Saxon times, have "seat and special duty in the King's Hall," others merely the domestic servants of the sovereign.

In the first category come the Lord Chancellor, the Keeper of the Great Seal; the Lord Treasurer, the custodian of the royal revenue; the Lord President, who proposed the business for the King's Council and presided there in his absence; the Lord Privy Seal; and the Secretaries of State, two in number, who prepared the business for the Council, and through whose hands passed the grants and warrants for royal signature, and all the detailed workings of the administration.

More directly associated with the household was the Lord Chamberlain. He enjoyed "Livery and Lodging" in the Court, and at every coronation

received forty ells of crimson velvet for his own robes and bore the ceremonial sword, the gold oblation, and the crown, before the king at the ceremony; while he also governed the whole palace of Westminster, and, when Parliament opened, sat at the king's right hand. Further, it was he who superintended all officers of the King's Chamber, and such varied functionaries as the Comedians, the Physicians, the Trumpeters, and the Chaplains.

Other great officials were the Earl Marshal, who took cognizance of war and administered jurisdiction over the prison of the Marshalsea; the Lord High Admiral, who controlled all maritime affairs, and had the entire patronage of the Navy in his hands; the Master of the King's Horse; the Lord High Almoner, who dispensed the royal alms; the Master of the Ceremonies; the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber; the Dean of the Chapel Royal, who acknowledged no episcopal jurisdiction; and a group of officials, presided over by the Treasurer of the Household, who constituted the "Board of Green Cloth," which examined the household accounts and dealt with minor disturbances in the Court, within the "Verge," or twelve-mile radius.

From these great officials we descend to numerous intermediate ones—the Keeper of the King's Wardrobe, the Master of the Revels, the Physicians, the Surgeons, the numerous Chaplains, the Library Keeper, and so down to the Trumpeters, the Heralds, the Master of the King's Barges, the Musicians, the Cooks, the Keeper of Ice and Snow, the Keeper of the Cormorants, and the Master of the Bears. Lastly, we must not omit Geoffrey Hudson, the queen's dwarf at the Court of Charles I; and Archibald Armstrong, the king's jester. Geoffrey Hudson had been originally in the service

of the Duke of Buckingham, and first attracted royal notice by being served up in a pie at a State banquet, and subsequently passed into the retinue of Henrietta Maria, who treated him with considerable favour, and even employed him on commissions to France.

Archibald Armstrong was a Scotchman by birth, and already the royal jester in 1603, and he retained his place through the reigns of James I and Charles I, until dismissed in March 1637. John Taylor describes him as that "Spout of Sport, and Regent of ridiculous confabulation, Archibald Armstrong alius the Court Archy." He seems to have been as quick-witted as he was impudent, and he was given considerable licence. When Buckingham threatened to have him hanged, he replied: "No one ever heard of a fool being threatened for talking, but many Dukes have been beheaded for insolence." Laud disliked him, especially after the occasion when "Archy" had obtained leave to say "Grace," and pronounced solemnly, "Great praise be given to God and little laud to the Devil," and he did not rest till he secured the jester's dismissal from the Court.

This, then, is the Court, a heterogeneous community of people. At the centre, the king and his great ministers sit in council, for where the king is there still is the State, and there too is Justice. But though this is the heart of the Court, from which its life pulsates, it is only a part of the whole; the rest is a medley of folk, grave and gay, of every sort and type, generally all seeking to advance their own prosperity at the king's expense.

We think to-day of a Court as a place to which admission is difficult, but the seventeenth-century Court was a very public place; people used to crowd

in to see the king dine, and when James I gave a banquet to the Constable of Castile, rails had to be erected to prevent the crowds from pushing too near the royal tables. Free tables, too, at which the public could enjoy the king's hospitality, used to be laid. But when Charles I came to the throne, he reduced the lavish expenditure of James I, and a contemporary writes on July 7, 1626: "After Sunday next all the tables at Court are to be put down and the Courtiers put upon board wages, except the Chamberlain, the Master of the Horse, the Secretary that waits, and the Groom of the Stole." Even Charles II, when the free tables were restored at the Restoration, grudged the expenditure upon them, and on August 20, 1663, John Evelyn noted "it was said it should be the last of the public diets or tables at Court, it being determined to put down the old hospitality, at which there were great murmurings."

If free meals disappeared, there was still free access to the public, when the Court held pageants. On New Year's Eve, 1662, there was a great ball at Whitehall, and Pepys and his friend Mr. Povy went to see it. "He brought me," says Pepys, "into the Duke's chamber, where I saw him and the Duchess at supper, and thence into the room where the ball was to be, crammed with fine ladies, the greatest of the Court. By and by comes the King and Queene, the Duke and Duchess, and all the great ones. Having stayed here as long as I thought fit and to my infinite content, it being the greatest pleasure I could wish to see at Court, I went home, leaving them dancing."

In such a heterogeneous community, the discipline of the Court rested largely on the personal character of the king, though officials like the Earl Marshal and the Lord Steward were responsible for maintaining

CHARLES I. DINING IN STATE

Engraving by Hollar. British Museum

order within the precincts, and imprisoning offenders in the Marshalsea.

Under James I, the Court was notorious for its laxity; drunkenness and vice were common and uncontrolled, while the wholesale extravagance of the administration left to Charles I an unwelcome legacy of debt.

When Charles I succeeded, he at once restored order in the Court. "The face of the Court was entirely changed," says Mrs. Hutchinson, "for King Charles was temperate, chaste and serious," and courtiers soon learnt to dread the chill severity with which he received any sign of horseplay or disorder. He treated those around him with punctilious courtesy, and expected the same in return. "He would permit none to enter abruptly with him into business," says Bulstrode, "though in Council, his Arguing was beyond measure Civil and patient. He would seldom or never contradict any man angrily, but would always say, 'By your Favour I think otherwise, or I am not of your opinion.'"

Charles II was too indolent to maintain any discipline in the Court, though he himself suffered from the lack of it, and Halifax describes vividly the annoyance the king endured from the hangers-on at the Court: "The being galled with Importunities, pursued from one Room to another with asking Faces, dismal sound of unreasonable Complaints and ill-grounded Pretences, the Deformity of Fraud, ill-disguised, all these would make any Man run away from them, and I used to think it was the Motive for making him walk so fast."

Under Charles II, the immorality and vice of the Court reached its climax. One of Pepys' friends said to him in 1667, "the King and Court were never so bad as they are now, for gaming and swearing, women and drinking," and if there were some women at the Court

like Margaret Blagg, who made "vertue a cheerful thing, lovely as herself," they were the exceptions.

When James II succeeded, he restored order in the Court. "The Face of the whole Court was exceedingly changed into a more solemn and moral behaviour," says John Evelyn; and during the reigns of William and Mary, and of Anne, it never relapsed into the licensed disorder of Charles II.

The Court had a real responsibility, for from it public morality took its tone, and if it sometimes condoned vice, it also performed a valuable service to the nation in its steady encouragement of art and learning.

It was James I who allotted £2,000 from the royal purse for the establishment of a factory by Sir Francis Crane at Mortlake for the manufacture of tapestries; skilled workmen were imported from Flanders, and hangings woven from the designs which Raphael had drawn for the Sistine Chapel.

Charles I was a great lover of art, and really understood it. "He was a most excellent judge and a great lover of painting, carvings, gravings, and other ingenuities," says Mrs. Hutchinson; and we need only turn to the Domestic State Papers and read his instructions to his agents in Italy for the purchase of masterpieces to appreciate the justice of her remark.

All through his reign Charles collected pictures. He secured a large number by purchase, from a collection belonging to the Duke of Mantua; he enriched Whitehall and Hampton Court with paintings by Titian and Correggio; while his artistic tastes were so well known in Europe that Cardinal Barberini sent him as gifts choice paintings by Leonardo and Correggio, and persuaded Bernini to carve that famous bust of the king, for which Van Dyck supplied the drawings.

Of all the artists associated with Charles I, the most famous is Van Dyck, for no other painted the king with such sympathy, or enjoyed so much his favour. In 1621, Van Dyck visited England, and in 1632 settled here on the invitation of the king, who made him his Painter in Ordinary, at an annual salary of £200, and lodged him at his own expense in Blackfriars. Then began a connection which lasted till Van Dyck died in 1641, and during these years he was the fashionable painter of the day. He not only painted those magnificent portraits of the king and queen, the equestrian portraits of the king, and the delightful group of Charles and Henrietta and their two eldest children, which hang at Windsor, but numerous portraits of noblemen of the Court. Orders came in so fast to him that often he would make a preliminary sketch on grey paper in black and white chalk, and then get one of his pupils to copy it on the canvas, generally leaving it to himself to complete the portrait with painting in the head and hands.

Van Dyck is pre-eminently the artist of the England before the Civil War ; he understood and appreciated the gravity and charm which were characteristic of many Englishmen in those troubled times, and the result is, he gives to his subjects a touch of idealism and a poignant beauty.

Van Dyck was not the only artist at the English Court under Charles I. Cornelius Jansen had come over from Amsterdam in the previous reign, Rubens was painting the canvases for the walls and ceilings of that banqueting-hall at Whitehall which Inigo Jones had built, and Hubert le Sœur was sculpturing the bronze bust of the king and that fine equestrian statue at Charing Cross of Charles I on horseback, in which in mournful dignity,

" Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall."

Under Charles II, the Court still patronized art. Though the king had not the same love of it as his father, he was the patron of Christopher Wren and Grinling Gibbons, and paid Lely, as the Court Painter, the same salary as Van Dyck had received, while under the later Stuarts, Kneller occupied the same privileged place.

Even more marked was the steady encouragement given to the drama by the Court throughout the century. James I's reign opens with an elaborate performance of Daniel's " Masque of the Vision of the Twelve Goddesses," at Hampton Court, Anne of Denmark, a little inappropriately, taking the part of Pallas, and all through the reign Ben Jonson was busy writing masques for production at the Court. Under Charles I, the lively pleasure taken by Henrietta Maria in amateur theatricals drew down on her the reproof of Prynne in his " Histrio-mastrix," and even in war-time plays were performed during the sojourn of the Court at Oxford.

Under the Commonwealth, plays were prohibited as ungodly, and though Cromwell loved music, and was also fond of good pictures, he did nothing to restore the drama, and the result was that at the Restoration there was a great outburst of dramatic activity. At Court there was His Majesty's Theatre and the " Duke of York's Playhouse," amateur theatricals were a common entertainment, and in Samuel Pepys' Diary we see not only how much an ordinary Londoner enjoyed the drama, but also how constantly it was patronized by the Court. " To the King's House," says Pepys one day, " to see the first day of Lacey's Monsieur Ragou, now new acted. The King and Court

all there and mighty merry, a farce" ; and another day he would go to see some new play by the Mad Duchess of Newcastle or one written by Aphra Behn ; while when St. Bartholomew's Fair took place, his entry is : "To the Fair to see the play, 'Bartholomew Fair,' with puppets, And it is an excellent play, the more I see it, the more I love the wit of it, only the business of abusing the Puritans begins to grow stale, they being the people that at last will be found the wisest."

Learning, too, found a place, though a smaller one, at the Court. Casaubon, the Huguenot scholar, was welcomed by James I. Charles I opened Laud's new quadrangle at St. John's College, Oxford, while Charles II, in spite of the remonstrances of his courtiers, always extended a welcome to the philosopher Hobbes. "Here comes the bull to be baited," he would say, and would enjoy drawing out the scholar's biting wit.

In this limited space it is impossible to do more than touch upon the general influence of the Stuart Court. If under a king like Charles II the laxity which it encouraged spread like some malignant disease throughout the country, against that must be placed to the credit of the Court, that without its steady encouragement it is doubtful whether art and learning would have reached the standard to which they had attained by the days of Horace Walpole.

Again, the Court diffused the refinements of life throughout the country. It was from the Court that men learnt of the beauty of Venetian lace or French tapestry, and it was the Court which brought colour and gaiety into the life of the nation by its provision of those pageants in which the populace delighted. If London enjoyed these more frequently than other cities, provincial towns, when the Court made one of its progresses, would kindle into a momentary gaiety, and

in the records of the Corporation of Coventry we get an account of such festivities. On September 1, 1688, James II spent a night at Coventry, and days before the mayor was busy planning his reception. All householders were told to "whiten their houses," "sand their streets," and "dress the points of their houses with green boughs." Then when the great day came, the mayor and aldermen, and 200 citizens, rode out to meet the king, with "all manner of music that could be got," a massy gold cup was presented to him, "Sir Thomas Norton made an excellent speech," and after the king had slept off the fatigue of his journey and of "touching 300 persons for the King's evil," he was entertained at a "stately breakfast and banquet at the city's charge." When we turn to the Corporation accounts, we find that the whole cost to the town was £434 2*s.* 9*d.*, that £5 7*s.* 6*d.* was paid to "Steward Fielding for making a speech to His Majesty," that Mrs. Smith received £2 12*s.* 6*d.* for linen sheets which she had lent for the occasion, and which had been spoilt, and that most of the provisions were bought from the various aldermen of the borough.

This is only an illustration of the part played by the Court in the national life. If in its essence the Court was an artificial structure, yet by long tradition, by the width of its interests, and by its progresses through the kingdom, it had become an integral part of the life of the English people.

CHAPTER VIII

MERCHANTS AND APPRENTICES

"THE worthy merchant is the pillar of a city, the enricher of a country, the furnisher of a Court, and the worthy servant of a King," is the description given by Nicholas Breton of the seventeenth-century merchant, and in the main it is true, for it was an age of notable traders and great commercial activity.

Under the Tudors, wealth had changed hands through the frequent confiscations and the agrarian revolution, and had also multiplied with the discovery of the New World and the opening up of new markets, so that by the seventeenth century there was much gold awaiting investment. Never had the investor needed to pick his way more carefully. Not only were there the well-established companies, the East India Company, the Muscovy Company, the Merchant Adventurers, the Levant Company, and the more recent Virginia and Guinea Companies, but numerous smaller ones, arising out of new industries, such as the Fanmakers, the Gunmakers, and the Spectacle-makers.

Many, too, of the mediæval gilds, like the Carpenters and the Brewers, were reorganized under royal charters, which increased their influence, as in the case of the Poulterers, who, after 1660, extended their circle

of trade from the city proper to a seven-mile radius in the suburbs. In this evolution of the gild into the company, the tendency had been for the larger organizations to absorb the smaller crafts akin to their own, but now under the Stuarts some of these smaller groups successfully asserted their independence; the Feltmakers, for instance, after a prolonged contest with the Haberdashers, forming themselves into a separate company.

Thus the investor could choose among a variety of enterprises, and if many sunk their capital in the purchase and improvement of land, others were attracted by trade, and when the East India Company planned a voyage to the East in 1617, £150,000 was subscribed, the shareholders numbered 1,000, and varied in status from fifteen earls and dukes to eighteen widows and maiden ladies.

Another profitable undertaking was the purchase of a monopoly from the Crown, for if Elizabeth had tactfully renounced them, James I resumed them. They provided a useful source of supply when Parliaments were difficult, they were an easy way of rewarding favourites, and he approved of them on economic grounds, for James believed in industrial monopoly at home, and high protective tariffs abroad.

So the Earl of Northampton received a grant of a starch patent valued at £4,500 a year, and when the Pinmakers needed capital to exclude Dutch pins from the market, they obtained it from a courtier, by offering to allow him 4*d.* for every 12,000 pins for the next forty years.

Nothing illustrates better than the monopoly the fact that the mediæval period of industry had passed. Now the craftsman no longer sold the product of his labour direct to the consumer, but was dependent upon

the capital of a middleman for the marketing of his goods.

While conditions of industry were changing with such rapidity from the old to the new, the State steadily upheld monopoly and privilege; but it was difficult to prevent "poaching." In the woollen industry in particular, many townsmen had bought up pasture in the villages, and now produced their own wool, which they either marketed as raw material in the town, or let out for spinning and weaving to labourers in the country.

In this way many men, besides the famous "Jack of Newbury" and Peter Blundell of Tiverton, built up a fortune; but in other respects the results of this development of the modern wages system were bad, for the villagers were deprived of that pasturage without which their arable land was unworkable, and so began to leave the country, while at the same time trade deserted the older corporate towns, where it was severely regulated by the gilds, for newer settlements in the country.

Moreover, these new clothiers paid but low wages. Under Charles I, a contemporary records, "The poor that spin, though they work very hard, cannot gain 4*d.* a day towards their living, and the majority 2*d.* or 3*d.*," while weavers in 1676 only earned "5*d.* a day and find themselves meat, though they be strong and able to work." In short, the most recent historian of the woollen industry admits "that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries England's greatest industry rested on the basis of sweated labour."

Meanwhile the State had not looked on unmoved while capitalism developed in every trade, and in 1562, by the Statute of Artificers, it made a determined attempt to perpetuate the mediæval system, in the

hope that so prosperity would return to the towns, the villagers would be kept upon the land, and poverty and unemployment averted.

In this famous statute, as in the poor law of 1601, the State adopted local custom and converted into a national system the seven years' apprenticeship, which had been one of the most salient features of the London gilds, and which ensured specialization, for no man might work at a trade who had not served his full time both as apprentice and journeyman. So at the age of sixteen or seventeen all boys, other than the sons of husbandmen or gentlemen, were apprenticed to a master-craftsman ; indentures were drawn, and, in the presence of the warden and officers of the gild, the fathers paid the fees for admission and the bargain was concluded.

Henceforth the apprentice passed from the control of his parents to that of his master ; he lived in his house, and was subject to his discipline, for the indenture stipulated that the master should not only teach him his trade, but " in due manner chastise him," and if he ran away, the master could employ all the machinery of the law to recapture him, even from his parents.

Such a system had much to recommend it ; the apprentice was given a thorough technical training, for before he could be released from his articles he must prove himself a competent workman, and in some cases show his capacity by a masterpiece.

Again, the system ensured that during the critical years of adolescence the boy was under control, for his life was severely regulated. " Taverns, inns, or alehouses he shall not haunt, at dice and cards he shall not play," ran the old rhyme. Often he was not allowed

A London Street-Seller

"Ripe Speragras." Tempest, "Cryes of the City of London." 1688. Bodleian Library

out after dark, and the dress which his master provided was sober, unadorned by the ribbons and the sword of the gallant. It is not surprising that high-spirited youths resented this severity; not only was their dress exceedingly dull, but their pleasures also were restricted. Some masters disapproved of football, others thought music unseemly, and life must often have seemed monotonous, for the hours of work were long—5 a.m. to 7 or 8 p.m. in summer, with an interval of two and a half hours for meals; while in winter they laboured "from the spring of the day until night."

However, there were the saints' days, when no work was done, and happily they were numerous, so that it is hardly surprising that when a Puritan Parliament abolished them as superstitious, the London apprentices revolted and insisted on a regular holiday in their place. Other delights, too, existed for the London youth—the Lord Mayor's Show and the public pageants, in which the Tudors and Stuarts delighted. Then, if never before, he realized he was one of a great society, and glowed with pride when the Fishmongers drove their great ship down Ludgate Hill, or the Mercers displayed their maiden chariot, with its nine white Flanders horses, and its fair maiden crowned on the summit, with Vigilance, Wisdom, and the other virtues at her feet, and Fame blowing her trumpet from a golden canopy.

On the whole the system worked well. Actual cases of ill-usage or neglect by the masters were few, and when they occurred, the apprentice could carry his case to the warden of the gild or the local Justice. For instance, Thomas Palmer was imprisoned by the Merchant Taylors, "for that he hath broke Henry Bourefelde his apprentice hede without any just cause," and

in such cases, if ill-treatment were persistent, the indentures were cancelled.

If the system had more merits than defects, it was none the less doomed to extinction, for it was a mediæval survival in a modern world. The strong group sense of the Middle Ages had vanished with its chantries, and the economic features of the gild would not survive the disappearance of its other elements.

As long as the personal rule of Charles I continued, apprenticeship persisted, for the Council exercised a close supervision of industry, and quickened the country Justice into activity in the enforcement of the law; but when the war came, and the fabric of Stuart administration was shaken, the system of apprenticeship was one of the first to break down.

Both sides in the struggle discouraged the enlistment of apprentices, but many high-spirited youths preferred the excitement and dangers of war to the dull routine of the shop, and the news-books are full of advertisements for runaways. Fewer boys, too, entered the gilds, for in the general disorganization many fathers successfully evaded the law, and taught their boys their trade at home, so escaping the cost of premiums —no light consideration, when taxes were heavy and living dear.

In the later years of the Commonwealth, and more particularly after 1660, the State made new attempts to enforce the law, and, when charters were granted or reissued, made apprenticeship an essential condition. But it was a losing game, for public sympathy was with the offenders. The interloper in foreign trade, the free workman of the town, the pedlar and hawker on the roads, all served the public and received its support.

Inside the gild, too, there was disaffection, for although the attempts of the workmen under the Commonwealth

to reorganize the society on a more democratic basis had failed, yet the masters found it increasingly difficult to maintain the discipline of the gild. As the century waned, regulation became increasingly unpopular, until it was regarded as a breach of the "natural rights of man," and a final blow was given to it through the municipal authorities selling the freedom of the borough to non-gildsmen.

So the end of the century witnessed the breakdown of the mediæval and Tudor system, and we can hardly see it fall without regret, for nothing equally effective has replaced it. It admitted the boy to a society wider in its basis than the modern trade union, it taught him a trade in all its processes, and it gave him a family life and control, infinitely better for him than the freedom of the streets.

Nor was the life of the apprentice devoid of culture. In some indentures the master bound himself to teach him to read and write, and often the London merchant was, like Milton's father, a man of considerable education, and frequently related to the country gentry, for though Fynes Moryson in 1617 declared "the Gentlemen disdaine Trafficke, thinking it to abase Gentry," the family letters of the period do not bear out his statement. It was a common thing for the younger son to be apprenticed to a London merchant, and there are cases in the Civil War in which it is he who lends the money to redeem the family estate from sequestration.

After the Restoration, caste feeling increased among the nobility. When Jack Verney asked his father to put him into trade, he wrote apologetically, "One must have some living nowadays. I am afraid you are a little displeased with your worme for desiring to bee an apprentice," and Misson notes in 1698 that men of noble birth no longer apprentice their sons to trade.

Yet if this is true, it is equally clear that the daughters of wealthy merchants intermarried freely with the country gentry; in fact, when Sir William Morice, Secretary of State to Charles II, was trying to find a husband for his daughter Gatty and his niece Admonition, he lamented that "there are so many merchants' daughters that weigh so many thousands that ours are commodityes lying on our hands." Indeed, there was little to choose between the houses of the great London merchants and those of the lesser nobility. Even as early as 1617, Moryson noted there were few "that have not cupboards of silver and gold," and as the century proceeded their taste for Eastern luxuries and more elaborate dress developed steadily.

In the earlier half of the period the merchants were generally Puritan in sympathy; their connection with the Low Countries brought them into touch with a militant Calvinism, while their journeys through Germany and down the Mediterranean made them acquainted with the activities of the Counter-Reformation. So their sympathies were entirely with the Puritan ministers, whose lectureships they frequently endowed, for the London merchant loved his Bible as much as he hated the Church of Rome, and consequently, when the Civil War broke out, he joined the Parliament, and with his wealth financed the armies of Cromwell and the fleets of Blake.

In general, however, he was a man of peace; he thought war a bad investment, and he only joined heartily in it when his national pride or his sturdy Protestantism was involved. In short, the Stuart merchant, in his love of peace, his deep-rooted prejudices, and his mingled conservatism and enterprise, is one of the most characteristic figures in seventeenth-century England.

CHAPTER IX

THE SEAMAN

" On those great waters now I am,
Of which I have been told,
That whosoever thither came
Should wonders there behold.
In this unsteady place of fear,
Be present, Lord, with me ;
For in these depths of water here
I depths of danger see.

" From sudden gusts, from storms, from sands,
And from the raging wave ;
From shallows, rocks, and pirates' hands,
Men, goods, and vessel save."

GEORGE WITHER. 1588–1667.

MANY travellers in the seventeenth century might have echoed George Wither's litany, for it was a time when in ever-increasing numbers Englishmen " went down into ships " and " occupied their business in great waters."

Not only was Spain in decline and unable to maintain her monopoly of the Pacific, and Venice no longer mistress of the Mediterranean, not only were the great trade routes round the Cape and across the Atlantic open, but the spirit of the Renaissance, with its quick curiosity and its zest for the unknown, was yet potent, while allied to it was that serene belief in English maritime supremacy bequeathed by Drake and Hawkins,

and the equally strong conviction of every English sailor that to plunder the Spaniard and the infidel was as " well-pleasing to the Lord " as it was enjoyable and profitable.

Again, it was an age of rapid commercial expansion, of rising colonies, and of a growing demand for Eastern luxuries. So along the great trade routes sailed the English carracks, low in the water, heavily laden with silk and spices, and frequently manned with guns, for the merchantman was still a fighting unit, and fought her enemies wherever she found them, regardless of diplomatic niceties of war and peace.

In these merchant captains we see persisting the Drake tradition of a high courage, a stern piety, and a vivid patriotism. When Captain Robert Knox lay dying, a prisoner in Ceylon, in 1660, he told his son that, though all his days he had " used the seas," never before had he " been in the hands of the enemy," and now in his old age, " to be a captive to the heathen and to leave his bones in the eastern parts of the world, when it was his hope, if God had permitted him to finish this voyage, to spend the residue of his days with his children in his native country, the thought of these things did even break his heart."

It was not their Dutch and Portuguese rivals whom the merchant captains feared, those they fought on equal terms, but rather the well-organized fleets of " Barbary and Sallee," the Corsairs, who, having learned the art of navigation from the Christians, now exploited it against them.

These were the very aristocracy of pirates, they had reduced plundering to a science; in fact, their states subsisted on it. When their fleet swung out to sea from the bay of Algiers, every ship long and light and built for the chase, with its resolute crew of fighting men, its

ordnance shining in the sunlight, and its hapless galley of Christian oarsmen below, the population of the city would crowd down to the harbour, and as the oars struck the waters they would cry, "Allah dumlec werrer" ("God give you a Prize").

Only too often the Corsairs were successful, for the slow and heavily laden merchantman was no match for them; but there were many English captains who fought them stubbornly. Such a one was Captain Nichols, of the "Dolphin," who, when his ship was attacked off Sardinia by five Turkish men-of-war, cried to his crew: "Countrymen and Fellows, you see into what an Exigency it has pleased God to suffer us to fall. Let us remember that we are but men and must of necessity dy, when, where and how is alone in God's knowledge and Appointment; but if it be His pleasure that this must be the last of our Days, let His Will be done, but let us for His Glory, our Soul's Welfare, our Country's Honour and the Credit of ourselves, fight it valiantly to the last gasp." And so they did, till the "Dolphin" broke into flames, and the pirates drew off alarmed, leaving Nichols free to quench the fire and to bring his ship, maimed but unconquered, into port.

It was not only the merchantman who feared the Corsair; every traveller went in terror of them, for every one knew the tragic fate of the captives in Algiers, where, behind stone walls built by Christian labour, dwelt a cosmopolitan population of every type, some captured at sea, others seized in a sudden raid on some unsuspecting village on the French or English shores, and there they languished, for if some few courageous souls succeeded in escaping, the majority remained in captivity till released by death, or by the tardy payment of an exorbitant ransom by their relations.

There was not a nation in Europe which did not suffer

from the Corsairs, yet nothing was done to create that international police of the seas which alone would have suppressed them ; for the Christians hated each other more than they feared the infidel, and as long as Dutch and English fought each other on the high seas, and French and English jealously watched each other's dockyards, so long would piracy triumph. In short, its suppression was never the main object of European naval policy, but always a cloak for deeper schemes and national antipathies.

Of all the Christian nations, England probably suffered most from the Algerine pirates, for France, owing to its traditional alliance with Turkey, escaped more lightly, so we find the English State Papers full of complaints from the Vice-Admirals of the coasts, the mayors of tiny ports, and the relatives of captured men.

Another class of marauders which preyed on English shipping were the English and Irish pirates who lurked in creeks all along the western coastline, men who had frequently taken to the sea to avoid the gallows, and who generally worked singly or in pairs, preying on fishing-boats and smaller merchantmen, and then at night dropping into some tiny port to sell their plunder and obtain supplies ; for there was much collusion from the shore, and Sir Henry Manwaring, a notable pirate, tells us, in his treatise on the subject, that though by day the country people would not appear, they would often " privately with the Captain appoint where in the night he shall find so many Beeves or other refreshment as he shall need."

With so much smuggling and collusion from the shore, and with an inadequate Navy, the State was helpless. It alternately hanged and pardoned the offender, and piracy continued to flourish, especially round the coasts of Ireland, except when Wentworth

Ships off the Coast of Ireland

Engraving by Hollar. Bodleian Library

was Lord Deputy, for then, having had his baggage stolen by pirates, he set ships to guard the Irish seas, and resolutely hanged the delinquents. "I am forced," he writes, "to make bold with the gallows, for nothing else will put life into an Irishman."

In spite of all these dangers to English shipping, the coastal defences were shamefully neglected. If in times of great emergency beacons blazed on the headlands, and forts were repaired, more often they were entirely ignored. In 1626, Sir Robert Killigrew informed the Privy Council that £673 needed to be spent on Pendennis to make it defensible, while in 1630 a Commission of Enquiry into the state of St. Mawes reported that the gun-platforms were decayed and the fourteen ordnance unserviceable. Even in 1703 Portland Castle is described as "in a very dangerous condition; there is not a grain of powder in the Castle."

Thus the security of the coasts and the maintenance of English trade rested entirely on its Navy, and under the first two Stuarts, though more money was spent upon it than by Elizabeth, and though both kings took a genuine interest in shipping, the Navy never reached the necessary standard of efficiency, for if James I and his son enjoyed visiting the dockyards, they both lacked the administrative capacity to remedy abuses, and their quarrels with their Parliaments left them without sufficient supplies for the maintenance of the Fleet.

First among the many abuses in naval administration must be enumerated official corruption. Every place had its price, every post its perquisites, and although the evil was temporarily scotched by the Commission of Enquiry of 1618, it was rampant again under the Admiralty of Buckingham.

Like his master, Buckingham had a genuine interest in ships, and he even succeeded in enlarging the dock-

yards and increasing the tonnage in the Fleet ; but he was no administrator, he was quite incapable of preventing corruption, and he frittered away the strength of the Navy on futile expeditions to Cadiz and La Rochelle.

So when we turn to the detailed history of the Fleet, we find it is a pitiful tale of the unnecessary sufferings of the rank and file and the gross misconduct of officials, of rotten timber and bad beer, of shoddy clothing and arrears of pay, and of their Nemesis, dysentery and disease and the breakdown of discipline. It is not surprising that the Navy had to be recruited by the press-gang, for, as one of the more humane commanders wrote in 1629, "foul weather, naked bodies, and empty bellies make the men voice the King's service worse than a galley slavery," and the result was that the character of English seamen degenerated, and in 1625 one captain writes, "The pressed men run away as fast as we send them down."

It is hardly surprising that when the Civil War broke out in 1642, the Navy ignored the genuine interest taken in it by the king and his efforts to strengthen it by the levy of ship-money. All it remembered was the many abuses, and the result was, it joined the Parliament.

Then began a new chapter and a brighter one in the history of the Navy, for under the Admiralty Committee and the Navy Commissioners reforms were effected, the pay of the seamen raised from 14*s.* a month to 19*s.*, and prize-money allotted to them, while over them were placed men who might previously have been landsmen like Blake, but who brought to their work a resolute courage and a high sense of duty.

In the dockyards, too, there was a new vitality. Corruption was punished, production speeded up, instead of ships being ordered one at a time, they were laid down in tens, and in every department, whether on

shore or at sea, discipline was enforced and the Navy made subject to thirty-nine "Articles of War." In fact, soon we see something of the spirit of the Tudor seamen returning, and Blake's bombardment of Algiers was in the best Drake tradition.

Yet one cannot picture the Commonwealth Navy in the glowing terms adopted by some historians. If we read the State Papers, we see that there was always the danger from Royalist privateers, the possibility of foreign invasion, the ravages of pirates, and the perpetual difficulty of obtaining recruits and providing for the sick and wounded.

Too little emphasis has been laid on the Royalist fleet of privateers in the West, which was equipped by Sir Nicholas Slanning, the Governor of Pendennis, and supplied with munitions by the sale of Cornish tin to French and Breton merchants; yet the contemporary news-books are full of references to its depredations on Parliamentary shipping, and Warwick's dispatches show clearly that he at least realized its importance as the means by which the Royalist armies obtained their munitions.

Even after the death of Slanning before the walls of Bristol, the Royalist fleet in the West continued its activities, till after the downfall of the king's cause, its remnants became incorporated in Rupert's navy. Into the details of the innumerable fights between the Parliamentary navy and these Royalist buccaneers we have no space to enter, but it is sufficient to note that when the Parliament at last obtained its supremacy of the sea, it was only after a struggle of many years' duration.

Again, it is indisputable that although the Navy of the Commonwealth deserves just praise for its success in the Dutch and Spanish wars, and for that cruise

in the Mediterranean which was the origin of our influence in those waters, yet it is equally true that in the later years of the Protectorate pay fell into arrears and recruits were only obtainable by the press-gang, while provision for pensions for the disabled fell far short of what was necessary. In fact, in 1658, Commissioner Peter Pett writes : " There are many (i.e. of the sick and wounded) who have received nothing," and " who are reduced to such extreme misery that I was forced to come out of town to avoid their clamours."

At the Restoration, once again a Stuart with the family love of ships ruled the Navy, and in some ways real progress was made. For the first time definite training of midshipmen and lieutenants in navigation was provided for, and after the Dutch war of 1664–7 a body of flag-officers retained on a fixed allowance, while in the Mediterranean the acquisition and fortification of Tangier gave England a naval base of real importance.

Unfortunately, although the king realized fully the value of Tangier, his subjects did not, and in 1680 they made the necessary grants for its maintenance against Moorish hostilities, dependent upon the king's assent to the Exclusion Bill, for, as one member of the Commons declared in the debate on the naval estimates, " Tangier is a place of great moment, but I take the preservation of Religion to be much greater." So Tangier was lost, for Charles thought the price too high ; its elaborate forts were destroyed, and nothing left to mark its English occupation but some few gold pieces buried beneath the ruins by the orders of the king.

Yet though Tangier was lost, English influence in the Mediterranean was not entirely destroyed, for in 1675 Sir John Narborough had succeeded in extracting from Tripoli, by means of a bombardment, more favourable

conditions for English shipping. His voyage is familiar to us from the delightful journal of Henry Teonge, that most jovial of naval chaplains, whose diary is interspersed with typical seventeenth-century marvels, menus worthy of Pepys, the accommodating item "No prayers to-day, by reason of business," and one good ballad, from which we cannot refrain from quoting:

"No noble acts of Hector I
Nor Priamus doe sing,
But joyfull newes from Trypoly
To England I doe bring.
An English frigott trim and tyte,
Cruising with merry glee,
Well furnished with men of might
An hundred fifty three.
And five and twenty gunns she had
Well mounted on each side,
Which when they once began to roare
The Turks could not abide.

"'A Prize, a Prize,' our Captain cryes,
'A Prize I surely see,
Beyond those rocks a vessell lyes
Belongs to Trypoly.'
And now with me, my merry hearts,
Your courage forth advance,
And show yourselves, brave English sparks,
Whatever be the chance."

Then follows the fight, and the victory of the English, and the ballad ends:

"God bless King Charles, the Duke of York,
The Royall Family,
From Turks and Jewes that eat no pork,
Good Lord deliver me."

This is the brighter side of the Restoration Navy. Beside it we must put the wholesale corruption in administration which culminated in the disgraceful spec-

tacle of the Dutch in the Medway, for with the return of the monarchy the sale of places, the abuses of victuallers and purveyors, came back too, money allotted to the Fleet was spent at Whitehall, and even an official as generally honest as Pepys admits: "Our method of accounting, though it cannot, I believe, be far wide of the mark, yet it will not abide a strict examination, if the Parliament should prove troublesome." Once again sailors were ill-fed, ill-clothed, and unpaid, and their sufferings in the Dutch war were so terrible that Evelyn's comment in his Diary is: "Lord, what miseries are mortal men subject to, and what confusion do the avarice, anger and ambition of Princes cause in the world."

The Dutch war was the nadir of the English Fleet, for seamen deserted freely to the enemy, and one commander told Pepys, "the true English valour we talk of is almost spent and worn out." There he was wrong, for under James II the Navy revived, and it was the characteristic ill-luck of the Stuarts, that, although the king lavished money and interest on the Fleet, and was personally respected in it, yet the Navy's Protestantism was stronger than its Royalism. Once again it deserted the dynasty, and under William III became that national force, supported by the yearly votes of Parliament, which was to triumph over the fleets of Spain and France.

In this brief chapter it is impossible to do more than outline some of the characteristics of English seamanship in the seventeenth century, but if we look behind the abuses, the failures which disfigured our naval history, we shall find that natural love of the sea and that courage in danger which have been throughout the centuries the heritage of our race.

CHAPTER X

THE SOLDIER

IN the seventeenth century England presented the curious spectacle of an unarmed nation in a world in arms. France was wresting from Spain its military prestige; Germany was the battle-ground for the vast cosmopolitan armies of Wallenstein and Gustavus Adolphus; in Prussia the Great Elector was laboriously founding the military state. England alone had no standing army; for her defence she relied first upon her Navy, and then upon that survival of the Anglo-Saxon fyrd, and the Assize of Arms, known as the Militia.

Under the first two Stuarts the defects of the Militia were notorious. The "trained bands" into which Elizabeth had organized it were only drilled one day a month in summer-time, and so perfunctory was their performance at the infrequent musters that as a fighting force they were negligible, the only exception being the London "trained bands," to whom the city gave a definite training by experienced soldiers in the Artillery Garden in Bishopsgate and the Military Garden in St. Martin's Fields.

In equipment, also, the Militia was inadequate. When it was called up for the Bishops' war, it appeared with rusty pikes and useless muskets, while only too often the county ordnance consisted of worn-out guns

and damp powder, for there was a general disinclination to contribute to the Militia, and few Englishmen took it seriously. Yet though the Militia was ill-equipped and entirely untrained, it had a certain personality. It was stubbornly local in sentiment; it held that its legal obligation ended on the county borders; at the expiration of forty days, for instance, Cornishmen would refuse to cross the Tamar into the "foreign land" of Devon.

For foreign wars, therefore, the Stuarts resorted to impressment, with disastrous results. The 12,000 unfortunate men who were dispatched to Holland in 1625 were described by a contemporary as "a rabble of raw, poor rascals," and in 1625, in the expedition to Cadiz, the verdict is the same. "The number of lame, impotent, and unable men is very great," writes an officer.

In these motley armies the criminal and the debtor found a place, for a common method of filling the army was to empty the prison. Every expedition had its Nym, its Bardolph, and its Pistol, men, as Shakespeare said, who had "gored the gentle bosom of peace with pillage and robbery," and now "made wars their bulwark."

Even such men deserve pity, for the armies raised by the first two Stuarts were invariably ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-paid. Official corruption in the Army, as in the Navy, was the order of the day, and it was responsible for the deaths of thousands. In 1625, Eliot, as Vice-Admiral of Devon, watched with a fiery indignation the disembarkation of the remnants of the disastrous expedition to Cadiz, and his wrath was the greater because he knew that much of the misery might have been prevented, had Sir James Bagg, who was responsible for the victualling, been a capable and honest man.

It was fortunate for England that her national reputation for valour did not rest on these disorganized forces, which brought nothing but shame upon her, but on the English volunteer, the man who went to fight Spain in the armies of the Dutch, or to help the German Protestants under Gustavus Adolphus, and who was everywhere welcomed and respected.

All through the frequent religious wars of the century we find the English volunteer. Sometimes he is the younger son of the country squire, out for adventure, or the peasant from the family estate who went with him; but whatever his social status, he is characterized invariably by a sturdy Protestantism and a cheerful courage in danger. These were the men who "learnt the art of war in the Low Countries," or in Germany. Among them we find Hopton, Skippon, Fairfax, and Leslie, and many another destined to win distinction in the Civil War. So if in 1642 England had no standing army or efficient Militia, she yet possessed this nucleus of men in every shire, who had a practical knowledge of the art of war.

The Militia was notoriously inefficient, but it was the only line of national defence, and consequently important. Over its control the battle between King and Parliament was joined, for if the real questions at issue between them were the vital problems, as to where sovereignty resided in the State, and what was the relation between authority and private judgment in religion, the final "casus belli" was the king's refusal to surrender the control of the Militia.

On August 22, 1642, war was declared, but long before that, in every shire, the struggle had begun with a contest between the two parties for the possession of the Militia, the Royalists pleading the Commissions of Array issued by the king, the Parlia-

mentarians asserting the authority of the Parliamentary Ordinance of the Militia. What is interesting is to see that both sides make much of legality and appeal to English conservatism, and of the two the Royalists had technically the stronger case, for it was indisputable that from time immemorial the command of the armed forces of the nation had been vested in the Crown, and the distinction between the King and the "King in Parliament" was a difficult one to draw.

All through August and September men were taking sides, for the war was one of ideals, not of classes, and so its most bitter feature was, that it divided friends and families, and Waller's letter to Hopton is typical of the feelings of many; "That Great God, who is the Searcher of my heart, knows . . . with what a perfect hate I detest a war without an enemie. . . . We are both upon the stage and must act the parts that are assigned to us in this Tragedy, but let us do it in the way of Honour and without personal Animositie."

From the beginning of the war, the country gentry played the leading part in calling up the Militia and in forming volunteer regiments from their friends and tenantry. When Sir Bevil Grenville rode up to the muster on Bodmin Down on August 17, the men in his troop all wore his family colours and had their pikes painted blue and white, while in Essex's army Hampden's Buckinghamshire regiment was dressed in green, and carried a standard bearing the Hampden motto, "Vestigia nulla Retrorsum," on one side, and on the other the Parliamentary device, "God with Us."

Both sides quickly discovered the limitations of the Militia. It was both undisciplined and stubborn.

When in Cornwall, in October, Hopton occupied Launceston with the "trained bands," "the baser sort of rogues fell a-plundering," and when they reached the Tamar, refused to cross it. Sometimes, too, the Militia did not realize the reality of the war. In Devon, when Hopton called a muster, he found, he relates, "a great concourse of people, yett it was rather like a great fayre than a Posse," only a few were armed, and all "were soe transported with the jollity of the thing that noe man was capable of the labour, care, and discipline." Such troops were useless, and were despised by men like Hopton, who had served abroad. In fact, with the exception of the London "trained bands," who proved their worth at Turnham Green, the Militia was worthless, and the sooner it was replaced by new armies the better.

All through the winter and summer of 1643, both sides were busy creating an army, first of volunteers, largely recruited by the country gentry, and then after August on both sides by impressment. Only by immense efforts were these armies raised, and when they took the field they bore all the marks of hastily improvised forces. They were raw and untrained, and liable to sudden panic. For instance, at Sourton Down, in 1643, an army of 3,000 foot and 600 horse under Hopton was thrown into utter confusion by a sudden night attack by 108 Parliamentary troopers under Chudleigh, and when in the midst of the fighting a heavy thunderstorm broke overhead, and lightning lit up the mêlée, the men cried in terror "that the Militia fought not against them but the Devil," they broke into panic-stricken flight, and never stopped till they reached Bridestowe.

Again, both armies suffered from a permanent

shortage of munitions. The Parliament soon exhausted the magazine in the Tower, and then bought supplies from Holland, while the Royalist armies were even less well equipped. At Stratton, at the most critical moment of the fight only four barrels of powder remained, and the final charge which won the day was made with pike and sword. Here and there in the South and West, local foundries for casting bullets were erected for the king's forces, but the bulk of its supplies were bought in France. They were paid for by the sale or loan of Crown jewels by the queen, or by the disposal of Cornish tin, which was shipped from Pendennis to St. Malo.

Food and clothing were as scanty as powder and shot. Hopton's men went into the battle of Stratton on a ration of a biscuit apiece, while in December, 1643, Essex wrote to the Parliament: "My desire is that if there be no pay like to come to me by the latter end of the week, I may know it, I not being able to stay amongst them to hear the crying necessity of the hungry soldiers."

If food was so short, there was no money for uniforms; often soldiers mistook friends for enemies, and to prevent such mistakes, Prince Rupert told his men at the siege of Bristol all to wear a green favour, and a handkerchief at the throat, to distinguish them from the enemy.

Even when weapons were procurable, they had many defects; the matchlocks, which had replaced the harquebus, as the musketeer's chief weapon, were so heavy that they had to be supported by a wooden rest to be discharged, while the fact that they could only be fired by igniting the gunpowder with the lighted end of a coil of match made them also dangerous, for the lighted cord swung over the

THE DRILL OF A MUSKETEER

Hexham, "The First Part of the Principles of the Art Military." 1637. British Museum

man's shoulder, and perilously near the bandolier in which he carried his powder.

Match, too, had other disadvantages; it blew out in rain or wind, and its light would betray the army on a night march. But it had its uses, for at Lansdown, Waller deceived the Royalist army by leaving a line of lighted match flickering in the wind behind empty trenches, while he withdrew his exhausted troops in safety into Bristol.

Musketeers formed the main strength of the infantry, pikemen completed it. These wielded a wooden stave, 16 feet long, with a formidable iron point, and before their charge cavalry quailed. At Stratton and at Lansdown it was the pikemen who carried the day.

As the war continued, cavalry became more and more in demand. These troops comprised dragoons armed with sword and musket; in later years, a firelock instead of the cumbrous matchlock, and harquebusiers carrying pistols and carbines.

In general the equipment of the English armies on both sides showed clearly the influence of the military reforms of Gustavus Adolphus. Weight was sacrificed to mobility, little armour was worn, light field-pieces were allotted to every regiment, as well as the few larger guns, throwing a ball of 16 or 20 lb., which were attached to each army, and lastly every regiment, like those in the Swedish Army, had its "chirurgeons" and its medical stores.

All these inevitable requisitions speedily exhausted the financial resources of the belligerents. The supplies of plate generously granted by the country gentry ceased, and both sides took the fatal but inevitable step of confiscating the estates of their opponents. Even so, the troops often went unpaid or took to plunder, and it was largely because the Parliament

was able by excise, decimations, more numerous confiscations, and substantial loans from the City of London, to solve the financial problem, that it won the victory over the king.

Want of money in the Royalist armies broke down the discipline which it had maintained in the earlier years of the war; habits of pillage spread like some malignant disease from Rupert's squadrons and Maurice's infantry into Hopton's victorious Western army, and, to his grief, he noted, "There began the disorder of the horse visibly to break in upon the prosperity of the publique proceedings," for he realized the fatal results of plundering in alienating the affections of the country people.

While the Royalist forces, in spite of the devotion of men like Hopton and Clarendon, slowly disintegrated for want of supplies and outstanding leadership, the Parliament had created that New Model Army which was to complete their downfall. Twelve regiments of infantry consisting of ten companies of 120 men, and six troops of cavalry of 100 men, were established, all clothed in good scarlet uniforms, adequately paid and fed, and, above all, highly disciplined, pillage and disobedience being punished with death.

It was on the principles on which Cromwell had formed his troop in the Eastern Association that the New Model Army was constituted, and these may be summarized as religious toleration, equality of opportunity, and severe discipline. In this new army there was room and freedom for the Independent, the Presbyterian, the Anabaptist, the Leveller, and the Fifth Monarchy man, provided they fulfilled their duty and kept the general peace, for, as Cromwell wrote in answer to one critic: "Ay, but the man is

an Anabaptist. Admit he be. Shall that render him incapable to serve the Public? Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing faithfully to serve it, that satisfies."

In its very essence the New Model Army was a democratic institution; educated men could rise from the ranks to a commission, and in the later stages of its history a "General Council of the Army" was formed, consisting of two commissioned officers and two soldiers from every regiment.

In its politics the Army was as varied as in its religion; it only drifted slowly into republicanism, and the conservative element in it persisted. We find Ireton, in 1647, wishing to restrict the franchise to holders of property, and saying: "No person hath a right to this that hath not a permanent fixed interest in the kingdom."

On the other hand, there were many more who agreed with the fiery Colonel Rainsborough in demanding universal manhood suffrage and annual Parliaments. "I think," said Rainsborough to Ireton, "that the poorest hee that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest hee; every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that government," while as for property, it "is the most tyrannical law under Heaven, and I would fain know what we have fought for, and this is the old law of England and that which enslaves the people of England, that they should be bound by lawes in which they have no voice at all."

Such was the New Model Army, keenly political, intensely religious, thoroughly efficient, the force which made Catholic Spain and France seek the alliance of the Protestant and regicide State.

None the less, it was this army which stamped upon the minds of Englishmen an intense dislike to military rule, and when the king was restored, its complete disbandment would have followed, had not the rising of the Fifth Monarchy men alarmed the Parliament into allowing Charles II a small standing army, consisting of Monk's regiment, henceforth known as the Coldstream Guards, a new regiment of Grenadier Guards, two troops of the "Gentlemen of the Life Guard," Lord Oxford's troop of Horse, called the "Blues," and two regiments returned from abroad, the Scots Brigade, which had served in the Thirty Years War, from France, and the Holland Regiment, later known as "The Buffs," which had fought for the Dutch Republic ever since the days of Sidney, and was now dismissed because it would not repudiate its English allegiance.

With the Restoration, official corruption again sapped the vitality of the Army; the men were ill-paid, ill-clothed, ill-fed, and consequently could only be recruited by impressment. But under James II there was some improvement, the Army was strengthened until between 13,000 and 16,000 men were encamped on Hounslow Heath, and it was the king's bitterest disappointment that, when William III landed, this force deserted him, for its Protestantism was stronger than its gratitude.

Under William III the standing army received Parliamentary recognition by the Mutiny Act of 1689, which provided for six months' martial law, and which was renewed as often as it expired; but the dislike of the Army remained. After the Peace of Ryswick, Army estimates were cut down, regiments disbanded, and William's Dutch Guards, in spite of his petition, sent home; in fact, it was only Louis XIV's

insolence in recognizing the Pretender that drove England again into war.

In the wars of William III and of Marlborough, England suffered heavy loss as much from disease as from wounds, for official corruption again was rife; the men were so much neglected that one soldier writes in 1689, "The lions in Africa are not more barbarous than some of your officers are to their sick men," and though Chelsea Hospital now existed for the disabled, it was quite inadequate to cope with the widespread suffering.

Under Marlborough there was some improvement; he was a better general than William III, and a more capable administrator, and his men were well fed, so that the greatest losses through bad administration are not found in his unit, but in the armies in the Peninsula and in the West Indies.

When the century ended, it left England with a larger colonial empire and an enhanced prestige abroad, but with an intense desire for peace and a rooted dislike for military rule. In fact, if she had come into line with the other Powers in creating a standing army, her national sentiment was unchanged.

CHAPTER XI

BEGGARS AND BEADLES

" Nor is this lower World but a huge Inn
And men the rambling Passengers, wherein
Some do warm Lodgings find, and that as soon
As out of Nature's Closets they see Moon,
And find the Table ready laid ; but some
Must for their Commons trot, and trudge for Room."

JAMES HOWELL. 1594–1666.

THERE is hardly a figure in seventeenth-century England so modern as the beggar. To " Piers Plowman," the beggar was " Godes mynstral," one to whom other men with comfortable homesteads should show a Christian charity. But by the seventeenth century this kindly pity had passed into the nervousness and open hostility of modern times, for the Tudors, living under the shadow of a widespread agrarian revolution, sweeping religious changes, and frequent wars, saw in the destitute poor only the nucleus of popular revolt. Nor were their fears groundless ; beneath the superficial brilliance and prosperity of Tudor rule smouldered the fires of popular discontent, and at intervals they blazed up into wild uprisings, like the Pilgrimage of Grace or Ket's Revolt. Such movements were the inevitable consequences of the transition from a mediæval to a modern economy, but they were the

THE

English Rogue

Containing a brief Diſcovery of the moſt Eminent Cheats, Robberies, *and other* Extravagant cies, by him Committed, &c.

To which is added a *CANTING Dictionary* Words now in uſe with *Beggars* and *Gypſies*.

Read, but take heed that you ſuch actions ſhun
For Honeſty is beſt when all is done.

Licenſed according to Order.

printed for *J. Blare*, at the *Looking-Glaſs*, on *London-Bridge*, 1688.

THE ENGLISH ROGUE
Title-page of Tract. 1688. Bodleian Library

more disastrous because at the same time the State abolished the very institutions which might have mitigated their severity, and the Church shifted the balance in its exhortations from almsgiving to "justification by faith."

Thus along English roads "in the spacious days" of Elizabeth might be seen not only the tinker, the hawker, and the player of interludes, but also the evicted copyholder, the discharged soldier, that unending procession of the blind, the halt, the lame, and the half-witted, those more sinister figures the highwaymen and felons, and all those whom their contemporaries classified as "arrant rogues and vagabonds."

To cure this widespread pauperism, the State had only one remedy, repression, and so the history of the first Poor Law is a grim story of brandings and whippings, banishment and the gallows, coupled with ineffectual appeals to private charity.

At last the State realized that mere cauterization was useless, and in 1601 the great Elizabethan Poor Law was placed upon the Statute Book. In this famous measure the Crown, borrowing from local experiment, established the principle that every parish was responsible for its own poor, and as alms were uncertain, a poor-rate was to be levied on every inhabitant, and two overseers of the poor, responsible to two Justices of the Peace, were first to collect it, and then to distribute it, in relieving the sick and impotent, apprenticing their children to work, and providing a stock of raw material on which those who wanted work but could find none should be employed.

For the sturdy beggar, harsher measures were reserved; he was to be arrested by the petty constable and secured in the stocks or local gaol, until

he could be brought before the nearest Justice of the Peace for trial. Then followed whippings and brandings, and when these were over, the vagrant was escorted to the nearest House of Correction for a period of compulsory labour, or, if he were a stranger to the neighbourhood, conducted over the boundary and sent from constable to constable back to his birthplace, with a certificate that he was "a sturdy rogue" and had "been lawfully whipped."

Such in brief were the main enactments of the Elizabethan Poor Law; it distinguished between the sturdy beggar and the impotent poor, it made the relief of the indigent compulsory, and it laid the burden of this duty upon three unpaid local officials, the Petty Constable, the Overseer of the Poor, and the Justice of the Peace. Further, it admitted that unemployment produced pauperism, and so it endeavoured to secure the education of destitute children and the setting of the able-bodied poor to work.

All through the seventeenth century the Act of 1601 remained the basis of poor relief. It is therefore possible to measure its effects. The most cursory examination makes clear that it was never more than a palliative; its remedies were superficial, and pauperism remained to trouble the country-side and impoverish the State. This was inevitable, for the rate of wages, as fixed by the local Justices, left no reserve for emergencies or sudden losses. The agricultural labourer lived on the very margin of subsistence; a long illness, two bad harvests, the loss of his common pasture or his cottage, and ruin stared him in the face; he must either take to the roads or seek the grudging relief of his parish. Such a case was that of James Wild, whose mill was burnt down in 1660, then three years later, "by the like accident of fire," his home and

stable, " so that now he is in a sad condition, having little or nothing whereby to maintain himself, his wife, and six little children, but is in much debt and like to be cast into prison."

In towns distress was common. In 1622 there was a slump in the clothing trade, and the Justices of Gloucester wrote to the Council: " The distress of those depending on the Cloth Trade grows worse, our County is thereby growne poore, and unable to releeve the infynite number of poore people residinge within the same, therefore many of them doe wander and are in case to starve as their faces doe manifest."

The sturdy beggar, too, persisted. Samuel Hartlib wrote in 1650: " Some of these beggars are very desperate and envious; if a Farmer give them not an alms to their mind, they care no more to set his Barn and Ricks of corn on fire, than to light a Pile of Tobacco." And another contemporary estimated that " there are thousands that their place of birth is utterly unknown, they had never any abiding-place in their lives, but were and are vagrants by descent."

It is hardly surprising that the Elizabethan Poor Law failed to eradicate pauperism, because it accepted a current rate of wages which Gregory King, the contemporary statistician, admits was equivalent to insolvency, and it also depended for the success of its measures upon unpaid and often overworked local officials. As a cure for the widespread social misery it was a total failure, but as a palliative it was not to be despised. It relieved the sick and impotent, giving now 5*d*. weekly " to a very poor infirm woman," now 12*d*. weekly " to a woman with seven children till her husband come out of gaol," while it also provided for maimed and destitute soldiers, for, as a contemporary declares, their case was hard: " Men

that have ventured their limbs in our behalfe . . . are thus requited, when they return home to live by some labour in their natural country, every man sayeth, 'We will not bee troubled with their service.'"

There was a constant drain upon the parish poor-rate, and it is not surprising that the overseer kept a sharp eye on the pauper, and was glad if he could prove him a stranger. Thus there were cases of dying paupers being deposited just over the parish boundary, for shrouds had to be paid for, and a frequent item in the sexton's account is "a shroud for a poore man, a stranger." In 1662 this parochialism dictated the Settlement Act, by which the overseers of the poor could dispatch to their original parish, within forty days of their arrival, any new family likely to become chargeable to their community, with this result, that the whole weight of authority became concentrated against any mobility of labour, and though cottages and work might be scarce, it was practically impossible for the married labourer to seek new employment, for the difficulties before him were insuperable; in every parish but his own he was an alien, and unwelcome.

Had the poor been entirely dependent on parish relief, they would have fared badly, but it was often supplemented by private charity. Anthony à Wood tells a pleasant tale of Hannibal Baskervyle, of Bayworth Manor, near Oxford, who "was so great a cherisher of wandering beggars that he built a large place like a barn to receive them, and hung up a little bell at his backe doore, for them to ringe when they wanted anything."

More systematic were the schemes set forth by Sir Ralph Verney in 1652 in his Memorandum, "How to releeve Claydon Poore." "All men that can work,

want work, and are without work, shall be given work according to their abilities," he resolved, and he goes on to discuss the apprenticing of destitute children, and the possibility of running a village cow-club on co-operative lines, the first beasts being provided by himself, and then the villagers sharing equally the profits and losses of the undertaking.

Where the lord of the manor cared for his tenantry, the poor were temporarily secure; but estates changed hands, and the new landlord might live at Court and be utterly indifferent to the welfare of the poor. In a contemporary ballad we get the lament over such a change:

> "I read in ancient times of yore,
> That men of worthy calling,
> Built almshouses and spittles store,
> Which now are all down falling,
> And few men seek them to repair,
> And none is there among twenty
> That for good deeds will take any care
> While Mock-begger Hall stands empty."

Some relief was still afforded by local almshouses, some of mediæval origin, transferred to the control of the municipality at the Dissolution; others of more recent foundation; institutions like the Hospital of St. Cross at Winchester, St. Giles at Norwich, or those two almshouses at Leicester for aged men and women, in which Celia Fiennes noted that the inmates had *2s. 8d.* a week, "Candles, fewell, oatmeale, butter and salt."

In spite of private charity and public relief, pauperism grew rather than diminished, and the State and the theorists alike agreed that poverty must be prevented by work. In 1630 the Privy Council directed that the poor were to maintain themselves by honest labour, "and not to be suffered to straggle and beg

themselves up and down in their parish," and somewhat later Sir Josiah Child urged "that it was the great business of this nation to keep the poor from begging and starving," and to train them "to be hereafter useful members of their kingdom."

Children also must be taught to work, and from Samuel Hartlib we get minute regulations for a children's workhouse in London, in which boys and girls were to be lodged and fed at a cost of $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ a head per day, and at the same time taught to spin and knit and so earn 12*d.* a week. It is true their lives sound rather grey, and we are glad to note that they were to be allowed to play "the Drum, the Pipe, and the Trumpet" in the intervals of working and hearing sermons on "Contentedness in a low Condition, and the excellent Joyes of Heaven and the Horror of Hell."

Among all the reformers, the workhouse is the invariable remedy, though John Bellers disliked the name, and proposed instead the formation of "A Colledge of Industry," in which poor men, women, and children, following 200 trades, would form a self-supporting community, "something like the example of Primitive Christians that lived in Common." Defoe, on the other hand, described the workhouses as "publick nuisances which serve to the ruin of families and the increase of the poor." What was needed, he thought, was a new trade to provide extra employment. It was along these lines that Thomas Firmin began his work in Aldersgate; he supplied the raw flax, and the poor of the district spun it into yarn in their homes, and then received from him fair wages for their labour. "Had you seen," he writes, "with what joy and satisfaction many Poor People have brought home their work and received their

money for it, you would think no Charity in the world like unto it."

For the deserving poor, and especially the debtor, whom imprisonment successfully prevented from regaining his solvency, the seventeenth century had some pity; but for the rogue and vagabond it had none. As he stood in the pillory or sat in the stocks, he was pelted and stoned, and the brandings and whippings inflicted upon him were regarded as almost as good a diversion as bear-baiting. Except for the debtor, and the political offender "detained during His Majesty's pleasure," imprisonment was not a penalty, but merely the detention of the prisoner in safe custody till he could be brought before the Justices for trial, and consequently the number of prisoners in the country was relatively small. It was well it was so, for life in a seventeenth-century prison approximated to Hobbes' State of Nature, in being "nasty, brutish, and short."

In London, the chief prisons were the Tower (used mainly for political offenders), Bridewell, the Fleet, Newgate, the Marshalsea, and the Savoy; while in the shires there were the county gaols, and various private prisons, like those of the Bishops of Ely and Durham, and the Debtors' Prison of the Earl of Godolphin at Penrhyn, which produced an annual rent of £4.

In some cases a mediæval castle like the Tower of London or the Keep at Launceston had been converted into a prison, while at Bridewell, Thomas Ellwood, the Quaker, found "a fair chapel," and a room which he describes "as one of the fairest I was ever in," and no wonder, for it had for many ages past been the royal seat or palace of the kings of England. The county gaol was not always a castle;

at Reading it was "three rooms in a public-house belonging to the town," at Banbury "a close, nasty place, several steps below ground, where frogs and toads did crawl," while even worse were the "Doomsdale" at Launceston, in which George Fox was confined, and the "Little Ease" of Northgate Prison, in which a man could neither sit nor lie.

Whatever the variety in the buildings, the system of administration remained the same; the prison was a commercial concern, run for profit by the Governor, who paid for the privilege a sum of money to the Crown.

Under this system, prison was an expensive boarding-house, where few men could afford to stay, for everything had its price, and for the penniless there was only the starvation fare of the "county allowance" of 2*d.* worth of bread a day. It was recognized as insufficient, and in 1572 the Justices were empowered to levy 6*d.* or 8*d.* a week in order to supplement it; but even so, at Whitechapel a begging box was hung outside the Debtors' Prison, and in Wiltshire, at Christmas-time, two felons chained together were allowed to collect food from the townspeople.

For the prisoner with friends or private means, prison life was less rigorous: a private room and bedding, fire and light, were procurable, though at an extortionate rate, for we find that when Tom Verney was imprisoned in the Fleet for debt, his brother Ralph paid 8*s.* a week for his room, 1*s.* 6*d.* a day for his food, and 2*s.* for "a cleane payre of sheets," while at the Bridewell, Thomas Ellwood found "a chandler's shop at which beer, bread, cheese, eggs and bacon," might be purchased, while for a consideration the friends of the prisoners were allowed to bring them food and bedding.

Many other concessions might be bought; books were allowed to Sir John Eliot in the Tower, while the Master at the Bridewell permitted the Quaker prisoners to work at their trades, and even to leave the prison on parole to market their goods. Defoe, too, discovered that gentlemen debtors could spend the winter in the Fleet, where the rooms were better, and the summer in Southwark prison, where a walk in St. George's Fields was pleasant.

The man most to be pitied was the friendless and penniless prisoner, in the hands of a brutal gaoler; there was no appeal from his decisions, he was absolute master of the prison, and no visiting Justice inspected his actions. Brutality was common, heavy flogging the law prescribed and allowed, but the use of irons was left to the caprice of the gaoler, and it is certain that if torture was no longer a part of the law, it was undoubtedly at times applied.

If the system gave the brutal gaoler a terrible licence, it also enabled the kindly man to do much for his prisoners. Such a man was Sir Allen Apsley, the Lieutenant of the Tower, and the father of Mrs. Hutchinson, who records that "he was a father to all his prisoners, sweetening with such compassionate kindness their restraint that the affliction of the prison was not felt in his day," while her mother not only visited and tended the sick, but also gave money for their "rare experiments" to Sir Walter Ralegh and Mr. Ruthin, who "were addicted to chemistry."

Nothing could differ more from the whitewashed cells of a modern prison than the seventeenth-century prison, with its large common rooms, in which men and women of every age and every degree of criminality were herded together, for the only classification was a pecuniary one.

Undoubtedly prisoners contaminated each other; many a man who went in honest, came out a criminal, while the overcrowding was so great that gaol-fever was the scourge of the prison and the terror of Judge and Jury at the Assizes. Many men were ignorant of these terrible conditions. Thomas Ellwood tells the story of an honest foreman of a London jury, who, when a prisoner died in Newgate, insisted on seeing the room where he had been confined, and on pushing his way into it, for it was crowded with Quakers and felons, cried in horror: "Lord bless me. What a sight is here! I did not think there had been so much cruelty in the hearts of Englishmen to use Englishmen in this manner. We need not now question how this man came by his death, we may rather wonder they are not all dead."

Perhaps the man most to be pitied was the friendless debtor, who saw his original liabilities mounting up daily with the cost of his maintenance, until he realized that his only release would be through gaol-fever.

Such were the conditions in a seventeenth-century prison, with overcrowding, disease, brutality, and starvation as common incidents. Yet in some ways the Stuart prison compares favourably with the modern one; it imposed no deadening silence or degrading uniform, it allowed the prisoner to work at his own trade, and it gave many more opportunities to his friends to write to him and visit him than the modern regulations permit.

In so short a space it is impossible to do more than sketch in the main outlines of the dark background behind the gaiety and charm of the Stuart period, but without it the picture is unfinished, for the beggar and the rogue must find a place within it.

CHAPTER XII

ROADS AND INNS

" Come, spur away,
I have no patience for a longer stay,
But must go down
And leave the chargeable noise of this great town:
I will the country see."

THOMAS RANDOLPH, 1605–35.

WHEN Thomas Randolph thus invited " Master Anthony Stafford " to " hasten Him into the Country," he was yielding to that same call of the road which had inspired Widsith the Wanderer, Piers the Plowman, and all that company of folk grave and gay, rich and poor, who trod our English roads from Saxon times to the close of the Middle Ages.

By the seventeenth century the character of English wayfarers had somewhat changed. No longer would be seen the comfortable mule of some lordly abbot, or the barefooted friar or pilgrim, for with the Reformation an immense amount of travelling ceased abruptly; the endless journeying to and from Rome, the episcopal visitations of convents and priories, and the hospitality of the prior's guest-chamber were all things of the past, and now the tired traveller no longer turned his horse's head contentedly towards the flickering lights of some ancient abbey, for he knew that the

new landlords acknowledged no obligations to those upon the road.

Still, if men no longer travelled for the good of their souls, they journeyed as before for pleasure and profit; and so along the highway might still be seen pack-horses laden with spices from Aleppo, or silk from Travancore, and that more tragic procession of "the blind, the halt, and the maimed," the sturdy beggar and the felon. Other wayfarers familiar to the fourteenth century, and still to be found in the seventeenth, were the pedlars, the hawkers, the player of interludes, the wandering scholar, and the discharged soldier, while sometimes men would see in the distance clouds of dust arising, and then would emerge that straggling train of carts and wagons promiscuously collected by the king's purveyors, which meant that the Court was moving, for then when the king travelled, all men knew it, and until the Restoration, shared in the expense of his journey, just as of old, when Henry Plantagenet restlessly toured his kingdom.

Such travellers found an infinite variety in English roads. The Ridgeway, beaten out over the grassy downs by the feet of men before history began, the stone causeways made by the Roman legions, Watling Street to the north and the Fosse Way from Lincoln to Exeter, Chaucer's road from Southwark to Canterbury, and the Pilgrim's Way from Winchester to the Shrine of St. Thomas—all these were famous roads; but there were many more justly forgotten, mere tracks and lanes so narrow that two pack-horses could not ride abreast in them, roads which were the despair of every traveller.

It was such roads which led to Defoe's protest in his "Essay on Projects." "The highways," he writes, "lie in a most shameful manner in most parts of the

The *CALL* to the
RACES
At New-Market.

To the Tune of To horse brave Boys.

TO horse, brave Boys, to New-market to horse,
you'll loose the Match by longer delaying,
The Gelding last now was led over the Coal,
I think the Devils in you for Laying,
Run and endeavour to bubble the Spotters,
Betts may be recover'd lost as the Brown-Boyers,
follow, follow, follow, lead down by the Ditch,
then take the Odds, and then you'll be rich,
For I will have Brown Bay if Blew Bonnet Ride,
I'll hold a Thousand pound on his side Sir,
Dragon could trowze it, but Dragon is old,
he cannot endure it, he cannot he will not
now run it as lately he could,
Age, age hath hinder'd his speed Sir,
Now, now, now see they come on,
see, sir, the Horse leads the way,
Full three lengths before at the turn of the Land,
Five Hundred pound upon the Brown Bay,
But a Pox of the Devil I fear we have lost,
The Dog the Blew Bonnet has run it,
(a Hurrain light on it)
the wrong side the Post,
This Boots was ever such Fortune.

Make haste, make haste, to New-market away,
you idly strabe your spare by delaying,
The Race will be run e'er the heat of the day,
we shall loose all our Betts by our staying;
Run, Run, and freely your Guinea's now venter
Upon the Brisk Brown Bay, when e'er the do's enter
Follow, follow, follow on this side the Ditch,
And take most Odds if you will be rich,
For for me I'll have Sorrel if Blew Bonnet ride,
And lay you fifty pound on his side Sir,
Sorrel runs swiftest since Dragon's grown Old,
You'll find by and by that he cannot endure it,
not run it as lately he could:
Years, years do's hinder his speed, Sir,
Now, now, now see they come on,
for Sorrel, still leads the way,
A full Furlong before at the turn of the Land,
Five Hundred pound 'tis that gets the day:
But fie on that Jockey, I fear I have lost,
Which case he had won it, had won it, if he had but
On this side the Post, (run it,
No Man had ever such fortune.

To horse, we must not of Fortune complain,
nor loose our time in Jockey's disdaining,
The Geldings are galloping over the plain,
while we stand idly, prating and gazing,
Run and attempt to retrieve all our losses,
And never stand railing at fortune and crosses,
Follow, follow, follow, I'll lead on this side,
And see if I can once be a guide,
'Tis the Brown Bay I fancy the trouls it apace,
I'll hold an hundred pound on the Race Sir,
Dragon do's trowze it, but Brown Bay's better,
And holds it, and holds it and wins it, and wins it,
He runs it, so merrily o'er,
I'll hold you now five hundred pound more:
But now we're undone, and our Guineas are lost,
The Rogue the Blew Bonnet has run it,
(a Vengeance light on it)
the wrong side the Post,
I never had such ill Fortune

This may be Printed, R. P.

Printed for P. Brooksby, J. Deacon, J. Blare. J. Back.

A Seventeenth Century Broadside

Undated. British Museum

kingdom, and in many places wholly impassable. I have seen the road, 60 to 100 yards broad, lie from side to side all poached with cattle, the land of no manner of benefit and yet no going with a horse, but at every step up to the shoulders full of sloughs and holes and covered with standing water."

Such a description might lead one to suppose that no organization existed for the repair of the highways, but this was not the case, for by the Highways Act of 1555 the Tudors flung upon the parish that obligation to maintain the roads which originally had been borne by the lord of the manor, not only as part of the "trinoda necessitas," but also as a duty well-pleasing to God.

By the seventeenth century road repair, like poor relief, had lost its religious sanction. It was now regarded as just one more of the many burdens imposed upon the parish, for by the Act of 1555 the churchwardens and the constable had to summon the parishioners annually in Easter week to elect "two honest Persons to be Surveyors for one year of the works for the amendment of the Highways in their Parish leading to any Market Town."

The unfortunate surveyors thus elected were obliged to accept office, though they knew that their duties were both unpleasant and unpaid, for the alternative was a fine of £5 by the Justices at Quarter Sessions. They are rather to be pitied, for their position was unenviable; thrice a year they "must view all the roads, highways, water-courses, bridges and pavements within the precincts," report on oath upon them to the nearest Justice, and then, some time before the Feast of St. John the Baptist, collect their fellow-parishioners for six days' unpaid and statutory labour and repair them.

When the appointed day arrived, we should have

seen assembled on the highways groups of reluctant labourers, for, under a penalty of a fine of 12*d.* a day, "every householder, cottager and labourer able to labour and being no hired servant was either to go himself to work, or to send one sufficient labourer in his stead," while more substantial men, those holding land worth £50 a year, were to furnish "one wain or cart furnished after the manner of the country, with oxen, horses or other cattle, and all other necessaries meet to carry things convenient for that purpose, and also two able men for the same."

The villagers assembled, the work began. The procedure was somewhat primitive, for the surveyor knew nothing of the technicalities of road-building; last year he had laboured himself, with pick and shovel; this year he superintended others, and watched as some men slowly cleared the ditches, flinging the mud on to the centre of the road, while others cut back the overhanging hedgerows, and finally completed their labours by throwing carelessly upon the roads masses of flint or gravel. As the villagers worked, they wished themselves back on their tenements, or paused to gossip with travellers, so that a contemporary describes them as "the Kings Loiterers," "who work when they list, come and go at their pleasure, and spend most of their time standing still and prating, looking after their fellows whom they send out from their work most shamefully to stop passengers for a largess." Many men, too, shirked attendance, and so the unfortunate surveyor had the invidious duty of presenting his neighbours for default before the Justices of the Peace at the Highways Sessions, for if he overlooked their misdemeanours, the road would not be repaired, and he himself might be reported for non-performance of his duty, and fined 40*s.* for each offence.

The whole system, like so much of the local government of the Tudors, rested on checks and counter-checks, but presentments and fines and unwilling labour do not make for good workmanship, and the roads remained so bad that, under the Commonwealth, and again after the Restoration, it was suggested in a series of Highways Acts that a parish rate of not more than 6*d.* in the pound should be imposed for a period of years for the mending of the roads, while Defoe proposed a more elaborate plan of a national levy of £3,000 for eight years to complete the rebuilding of the roads.

Nothing effective, however, was accomplished. The rate of 6*d.* in the pound was never enforced, the system of presentments continued, and the state of the roads remained the commonest of the grievances of the century, both with the unfortunate travellers upon them and the labourers who unwillingly repaired them.

If anything, complaints increased during the century, for traffic on the roads was changing in character as well as becoming much more heavy ; once every one travelled on horseback, but now wheeled conveyances were becoming more common, and a rough track along which a horse could pick his way threw the traveller in a coach from side to side, so that he reached his destination covered with bruises, for the first stage-coaches were springless, with very broad wheels, to prevent them from sinking into the mud, and though at first they were few in number, by 1622 John Taylor, the Water Poet, was complaining : " This is a rattling, rowling and rumbling age. The World runs on wheels."

If the stage-coach was uncomfortable and its progress so slow that the journey from London to Bath, a distance of 109 miles, took three days, yet it broke down some of the isolation of country life, and Chamberlayne

in 1649 praised it warmly. "There is of late," he writes, "such an admirable commodiousness for men and women to travel from London to the principal towns of the country, that the like hath not been known in the world, that is by stage-coaches, wherein anyone may be transported sheltered from foul weather and foul ways, and this at the low price of about a shilling for every five miles." Poorer people who could not afford this fare used the country carrier, who drove more slowly in a long covered wagon, and whose routes may be found in John Taylor's tract, "The Carrier's Cosmography."

In London, too, traffic was on the increase. By 1662 there were 2,490 hackney carriages plying for hire, in spite of the strenuous opposition of the Watermen and the efforts of the Crown to restrict them, while the number of private coaches increased yearly, so that in 1669, on May 1, we find Pepys and his wife setting out gaily in a fine new yellow coach. "And so we went along through the town," says Pepys, "with our new liveries of serge, and the horses' manes and tails tied with red ribbons, and the standards gilt with varnish and all clean, and green reines, that people did look mightily upon us, and the truth is, I did not see any coach more pretty though more gay than ours all the day."

This rapid increase in the amount and burden of the traffic inevitably injured the badly-kept roads, and finally, after numerous proclamations by the Stuarts limiting the tonnage of wheeled wagons, the turnpike system arose, by which the various local authorities received permission by a Turnpike Act to erect tollgates within their parish boundaries, and exact contributions from travellers for the upkeep of the road for a period of years. The first of these Acts

dates from 1663, and it was followed by innumerable others; but they were all temporary and local in character, and, apart from the fact that they gave rise to considerable corruption, are chiefly significant because they are based on two principles, that the parish is still responsible for the maintenance of its roads, and that those who contribute most to the wear and tear of the highway should also bear the burden of its repair.

If stage-coaches were bad for the roads, they benefited the innkeeper, and the seventeenth century sees a steady growth in the number of inns along the highway. Many of them stand to-day, with their black panelled walls and square courtyard, pleasant places which recall Fynes Moryson's praise of English inns: "The World affords not such Inns as England hath, either for good and cheap entertainments at the guest's own pleasure, or for humble attendance on passengers. For as soon as a passenger comes to an Inn, the servants run to him, and one takes his horse and walks him till he be cold, then rubs him and gives him meat. Another servant gives the passenger his private chamber and kindles his fire, the third pulls off his boots and makes them clean, and when he sits at table, the Host or Hostess will accompany him, while he eats, he shall be offered music, which he may freely take or refuse, and if he be solitary, the Musicians will give him the good day with music in the morning."

Such inns were more than welcome in the seventeenth century, for in addition to the manifold discomforts of the road, the traveller was often exposed to the perils of gangs of highwaymen who infested the highways and often added murder to theft, for "Dead men tell no tales," and the penalty for both crimes was the gibbet. John Evelyn's experience in being

robbed on the road near Bromley, and then left penniless tied to a tree, was favourable compared with the fate of some unfortunate travellers.

Travelling was thus not without its perils, and yet the Stuart period is essentially one in which men enjoyed travel, and regarded it as a "running academy," as James Howell calls it. Certainly they believed no man's education complete without the "grand tour" on the Continent, which usually followed the three or four years at the university. "Travel," said Bacon, "in the younger sort, is a part of education, in the elder a part of experience." But he did not approve of boys travelling abroad except under the care of "some tutor or grave servant," and he would probably have agreed with Milton, who would not permit young men to travel till they were three-and-twenty, for then they would be of an age "not to learn principles but to enlarge experience." If some men, like the great Puritan, feared the contamination of foreign manners, many others felt that only abroad could a young man acquire that finish of manners and perfection of courtesy essential to a gentleman, while in addition the "grand tour" was a liberal education in art and politics.

Undoubtedly it had much to recommend it; it widened the outlook of the average Englishman, for though we see in the memoirs of such typical characters as John Evelyn and Sir Kenelm Digby the quick curiosity, the fine artistic sense, and the love of the marvellous of their generation, we do not discover a trace of that ignorant and complacent condescension with which the Englishman abroad is credited in later ages.

Nor when his travels were over, and he had settled down upon his estate, did the Stuart squire lose his

interest in adventure ; on the shelves of his panelled library might be seen "Voyages" of Hakluyt, "Coryats Crudities" "gobled up in five Moneths travells," and numerous maps and itineraries.

It is not surprising, for the love of adventure and the desire to cross the seas is part of our national inheritance, the legacy of that Saxon merchant "who fared thrice over the wide sea by his own means," and so became "thenceforth of thegn right worthy," and of many a Viking and Norman ancestor.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME STUART LETTERS AND THEIR WRITERS

THE seventeenth century might well be called "the golden age of letter-writing," for it produced the letters of Cromwell and Dorothy Osborne, of Clarendon and the Verneys, and those large numbers of private letters of less distinguished men and women which lie, brown and dusty, and yet unpublished, in many an English manor-house.

The Stuart period was the age of Pepys and Evelyn, when men, and women too, wrote diaries and autobiographies for pleasure, and enjoyed their correspondence.

In part, the many letters which they wrote were also due to the difficulties of travelling, and the strong sense of family ties, and when to these two factors were added the enforced separation of civil war and the establishment of a postal system, all the conditions favourable to letter-writing were present.

Since mediæval times a royal postal system had existed, but for the general public there were no facilities, and letters were sent by the country carrier, or by private messenger, until 1637, when Thomas Witherings obtained a monopoly for carrying English letters, and established a public postal system at a cost of $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ a single sheet for a distance of 80 miles or

less, 4*d*. up to 140 miles, 6*d*. beyond that, and 8*d*. to Scotland.

His monopoly provoked opposition; he was accused of mismanagement and superseded, and in 1644, Edmund Prideaux, a Devon man, later the Attorney-General, was made Master of the Post. Prideaux set up a weekly post to all parts of the country, and by 1649 the revenue from the post amounted to £5,000. But men thought his charges heavy, and the City of London tried to establish its own post at a cheaper rate; this was suppressed as a breach of his monopoly, and when he resigned in 1653, a uniform system remained, and in 1657 a general Post Office was set up by Act of Parliament and private posts forbidden.

At the Restoration the Post Office was left intact, but from 1663 grew up the custom of "franking," by which State officials and Members of Parliament, while the Houses were in session, were allowed free postage.

In 1683 a private penny postage for the transmission of letters in London was established by William Dockwray, six receiving offices opened, and letters delivered at a charge of 1*d*. in the city and 2*d*. in a radius of ten miles, as often as six times a day. Soon Dockwray's offices numbered between four and five hundred, and the Court of King's Bench decided that the London District Post, as it was called, must be incorporated in the royal postal system, though with Dockwray as its first official controller.

Cheap postage thus justified itself. Soon the revenue from the post reached £60,000 annually; but Cotton and Frankland, the two most notable Postmasters, steadily refused to raise the rates, and maintained that cheap postage was not only essential to the public, but profitable to the State.

Thus the facilities for letter-writing steadily de-

veloped; the number of letters passing through the Post Office rose to many thousands, and the wealth of Stuart correspondence extant to-day is so great that it is impossible here to do more than touch on its more general characteristics, with some illustration from well-known collections.

In form the seventeenth-century letter was rather different from our own; there were no envelopes, men wrote closely on a single sheet, and some, like Lord Clarendon, crossed their letters till they are almost indecipherable, while many throughout the war used cipher freely for greater security. When written, the sheet was dried with fine sand, for there was no blotting-paper, folded, sealed and addressed, and often an air of urgency imparted by the superscription, "These these, Haste Haste."

Naturally, the letters vary greatly in style and character, but there was generally a certain formality in address, even in private letters. The wife of Sir Bevil Grenville writes to her husband as "Sweet Mr. Grenville," though she ends her letter, "So in spite of the Divell, yours immoveably, Grace Grenville." Human affection broke down formality. Dorothy Osborne often forsakes the formal ending to her lover, "Your faithful friend and servant," for "My dearest dear Adieu," while Charles I addresses his wife as "Deare Heart."

Thus the letters are a happy mixture of the sonorous prose of the seventeenth century and the unaffectedness of a very human document, for although men enjoyed their correspondence, and had an ear for a well-turned phrase and a happy quotation from Cicero, yet they escaped pomposity, and their letters have a delightful simplicity.

The "Ho-Elianæ, or Familiar Letters" of James

Howell, the Historiographer Royal of Charles II, reveal a typical seventeenth-century mind, pious and scholarly; he loves to study the heavens or to wander in some pleasant grove, while he has all the zest for travel and that love of the marvellous which is characteristic of his generation. His letters, however, with all their charm, are somewhat too professional for quotation here, for although some are genuine correspondence, others are merely essays thrown into the form of letters.

It is not in such studied epistles that we approach most intimately the mind of the period, but in the simple correspondence of ordinary men and women, and of this type of letter, those written by Sir William Morice, one of the two Secretaries of State of Charles II, are a good example. Sir William Morice was a West-Country man by birth and upbringing, and the kinsman of Sir John Grenville and General Monk; to this relationship, and to his well-known reticence and honesty, he owed his promotion to the position of Monk's confidant in the critical negotiations before the Restoration, and his services were so considerable that the king rewarded him with the office of Secretary of State.

From that moment till his death in 1676, Morice wrote regularly to his brother-in-law, Edmund Prideaux, of Prideaux Place, Padstow, and his forty-two letters are still preserved in that beautiful manor-house which Nicholas Prideaux erected in the year of the Armada.

The letters are written in a minute and scholarly hand, and are well preserved. In them we see the writer revealed as a shrewd, kindly man, prudent in temper and puritan in tendency, a man with a strong sense of duty to the State, a deep-seated affection for his family, and a genuine love of learning; a man also

so well balanced that his sudden rise to power did not elate him, and he writes: "I am to-morrow setting forth to waite upon the Kinge, who will be receaved with more grandor and celebrity than ever any King of England was, though my fortunes are not only above my merit but beyond my expectation. . . . I can never much feare to lose what I never had greate desire to obtaine." A year later he was of the same opinion: "Though God hath called me to a place of much honour and no little profit, yet contentment (the maine rootes whereof are liberty and leasure) is a flower that springs not out of this ground."

Perhaps it was this view of the Court, as well as his natural reserve, which led Morice to write with such a tantalizing reticence on political affairs; his letters are chiefly of social interest, and, instead of the king and his ministers, we meet in them his favourite niece, "Sweet Admonition" Prideaux, whose only fault was that she "affects solitude and foments sadnesse," and her clever young brother, Humphrey, the future Dean of Norwich, who, as Busby's pupil at Westminster, indulged in "nocturnal lucubrations," and was so "eagre and impatient" a student that his uncle warned him "he might sooner be a scholler if he endeavoured not to be so too soone." Finally, there is the last letter written a few weeks before the death of the writer, and beginning, "My eldest and best friend. Friendship halfes griefes and doubles joys, a friend being myselfe in another skin," and ending, "I am though not long to be Deare Brother. Your most humble servant. Will. Morice."

Utterly different from the letters of Morice are those of Strafford; many are State Papers of the first importance, and the writer shows himself on paper, as in speech, unbending and fearless. "Sound or lame,"

THOMAS WENTWORTH, EARL OF STRAFFORD
Engraving by Hollar from the Portrait by Van Dyck. Bodleian Library

he wrote to Coke in 1639 when summoned to England, "you shall have me with you before the beginning of Parliament," and this though he was crippled with gout and knew his enemies awaited him. His last letter to the king has the resolution and the tragic dignity of Van Dyck's portrait. "Sir," he writes, "I do most humbly beseech your Majesty . . . to pass this Bill. To a willing man there is no injury done, and as by God's grace I forgive all the world with calmness and meekness of infinite contentment to my dislodging soul, so, Sir, to You I can give the life of this world with all the Cheerfulness imaginable." It is hardly surprising that when Charles signed the Act of Attainder he declared, "My Lord of Strafford's condition is more happy than mine," and he spoke truly.

Yet Strafford found it hard to leave his children; his letters to their grandmother show how much he loved them. "Wherever they are," he wrote of Anne and little Arabella, "my Prayers shall attend them," and adds that "their poor Father is ignorant in what belongs women, and other ways God knows distracted and so awanting unto them in all save loving them." His last letter to his son has the same tenderness: "These are the last lines that you are to receive from a father that tenderly loves you. . . . Serve God diligently . . . and never suffer the thought of Revenge to enter your Heart. And God Almighty of His Infinite Goodness bless you and your Children's Children, perfect you in every good work and give you right understanding in all things. Amen."

Such letters are invaluable; they show us that behind the iron resolution of the great minister was a warmth and tenderness which few suspected, and also that pleasure in simple things which we find in

the letter to Laud, beginning: "To-morrow I am on hunting gone and so lost in the woods as you are not like to hear from me these six weeks. The plain truth is, I go to be quiet and to cast up my Accounts."

In Cromwell's letters the style is more involved. The writer argues with his correspondent: "Ay, but the man is an Anabaptist. Admit he be. Shall that render him incapable to serve the Public? Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it takes no notice of their opinions, if they be willing faithfully to serve it that satisfies."

The letters reveal a complex and introspective mind, living in uncertainty, awaiting Divine direction: "I live in Meshec, which they say signifies prolonging, in Kedar, which signifies Blackness," and then comes the sudden illumination of a victory like Naseby, and his letter to Lenthall is less the dispatch of a victorious general, but rather the outpouring of a man who has waited anxiously on Providence and now sees in the event the manifest approval of his God. "Sir," he writes, "this is none other but the hand of God, and to Him alone belongs the glory, in which none are to share with him," and then adds characteristically as he thinks of his men: "Honest men served you faithfully in this action. Sir, they are trusty; I beseech you . . . not to discourage them. He that ventures his life for the liberty of his country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience and you for the liberty he fights for."

His letters show a tenderness as great as Strafford's on occasions; it appears often in those to his wife and daughters, and even more finely in that written to Colonel Walton, his brother-in-law, after Marston Moor. "Sir," he writes sadly, "God hath taken away your eldest son by a cannon-shot. It brake his leg.

We were necessitated to have it cut off, whereof he died. Sir, you know my own trials this way" (for his own son had recently been killed), "but the Lord supported me with this, That the Lord took him into the happiness we all pant for and live for. There is your precious child full of glory, never to know sin or sorrow any more. He was a gallant young man, exceedingly gracious. God give you His comfort. . . . Truly he was exceedingly beloved in the Army of all that knew him. But few knew him; for he was a precious young man, fit for God. He is a glorious Saint in Heaven, wherein you ought exceedingly to rejoice."

In Cromwell's letters we live in the limelight of great events; in those of the Verneys of Claydon we see the background of war—the separation, the loss, the sequestrations; in short, the aftermath of the struggle.

The letters are numerous, often ill-spelt and illiterate, but they form so complete a collection that we are able to reconstruct the family: Sir Edmund Verney, the King's Marshal, who refused to desert the king, saying, "I have eaten his bread and served him near thirty years, and will not do so base a thing as to forsake him," and so died at Edgehill, the Standard still in his hand; Ralph, the Parliamentarian, who was exiled for refusing to take the Covenant; Edmund, the Royalist, who died at Newbury; and Tom, the family scapegrace. The women and children, too, are equally distinct: Ralph's devoted wife Mary, who wore out her strength in her efforts to free Claydon from sequestration; his sisters—Mary, who was "extreme clownish," but "had a greate deale of witt"; Pen, "who was not to all men's liking"; wilful Betty; and his own little daughter, Peggy, who died at Blois. At intervals, too, appears Lady Sussex, who married three times, and paid Van Dyck £50 to paint her portrait,

and then grumbled: "The picturé is very ill-favoured, makes me quite out of love with myselfe, the face is so big and fate that it pleases me not at all, but truly I thinke 'tis like the original."

So the letters remain, the intimate record of an ordinary family living under the shadow of "old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago," and as historical material they are invaluable.

More nearly literature are the letters of Dorothy Osborne to her lover, William Temple, for they have a lightness of touch and a delicacy of wit which the Verneys did not possess.

Nothing could extinguish the gaiety of the writer, though, when the letters begin, her mother was dead, her father old and ailing, and his estate impoverished by sequestration, while her brother Henry was a somewhat tiresome person, who steadily opposed her relations with Temple, and brought numerous and more eligible suitors to Chicksands, in the hope that his sister would retrieve the family losses by a wealthy marriage. But Dorothy mocked at these "servants," as they were called, especially the elderly widower, Sir Justinian Isham, with his four grown-up daughters and his large estates. "Some friends that had observed a gravity in my face," she wrote to Temple, "proposed a widower to me, that had four daughters, all old enough to be my sisters, but he had great estates, was as fine a gentleman as ever England bred, and the very pattern of wisdom." But she adds: "Our Emperor would have been to me rather a gaoler than a husband."

Beneath Dorothy's gaiety was a resolute will and a strong affection. "I find I want courage to marry where I do not like," she writes; and so she dismissed her many suitors, till Henry grew angry, and his sister writes: "We talked ourselves weary; he re-

nounced me and I defied him." She was determined to marry none but Temple, and her love illuminates her letters. "Last night," she writes, "I was in the garden till 11 o'clock. It was the sweetest night that e'er I saw. The garden looked so well and the jasmine smelt beyond all perfume. And yet I was not pleased. The place had all the charms it used to have when I was most satisfied with it, and had you been there I should have liked it much more than ever I did, but that not being, it was no more to me than the next field." And again: "Dear, shall we ever be so happy, think you? Ah, I dare not hope it. Yet 'tis not want of love gives me these fears. No. . . . I love you more than ever." The letters are not always in this passionate strain; often she just chats lightly of some French romance or retails the gossip of the country-side, but whatever she touches she illumines with the lightness of her wit and the charm of her personality, and we lay down her letters with real regret.

When we turn from the letters of Dorothy Osborne to the innumerable papers which constitute royal correspondence, we miss at first the human element, in instructions to ambassadors and negotiations with kings. Yet if we search, we shall find the same human interest, for in their letters kings and queens drop the mask of royalty and stand revealed. So Henrietta Maria writes to her sister in the critical days of August, 1641: "You have had troubles enough, but at least you were able to do something to escape them, while we, we have to sit with our arms folded, quite unable to help ourselves. I know well that it is not Kingdoms that give contentment, and that Kings are as unhappy and sometimes more so than other people."

Again we need to read the private letters of Charles I if we are to realize the capacity for affection hidden beneath his cold demeanour. As a child he had written to his brother: "Sweet Sweet brother, I will give you anything I have, both my toys and my books. . . and my cross-bows. . . . Good brother, love me and I shall ever love and serve you." And as a man he was the same. "Deare Heart," he writes to his wife, "I love thee above all earthly things, my contentment is inseparably joined with thine." And again: "I hope and pray that after a few months we may meet again with comfort, and that in the mean time God may give us both strength to endure vexations, if many more be in store for us." Again we need Charles's letters to show us the inner consistency which lay concealed beneath his many vacillations. When he writes to Digby, "If I cannot live as a king I will die as a gentleman," it is the lover of art who is speaking, as well as the king affirming his royalty.

Thus the final tragedy of his life was but the revelation of his carefully hidden personality, for he robbed his death of its brutality by investing it with his own instinct for beauty.

> "Vanquished in life, his death
> By beauty made amends,
> The passing of his breath
> Won its defeated ends."

Charles I's death gave him the opportunity for the "beau geste" of which he was capable, but with many of his subjects the same instinct for beauty remained concealed beneath the reticence of the Englishman; only in their letters do they reveal it, so that like some golden thread it shines through Stuart correspondence.

CHAPTER XIV

THE NEWSPAPER

IT is not surprising that the seventeenth century witnessed the rise of the newspaper, for it was the natural outcome of the intense political and religious strife of the period.

The first English journalists were the dependents of great men, employed in furnishing them with news of the Court during their absence, and of this type was Chamberlain, the correspondent of Dudley Carleton at the Court of James I.

Gradually this writing of news-letters developed into a calling; it required no licence, and a news-writer might have a regular circle of customers to whom he supplied whatever news he could pick up, and so valuable was his information that the news-letter persisted even after the rise of the news-book.

The news-book was a pamphlet of two sheets, a sixteen-page quarto, originating in the early years of the century, and known as a "Relation," or a "Coranto," for its main function was to supply foreign intelligence, and so numerous were they that in 1632 the Star Chamber suppressed them, and not till 1638 did it grant a monopoly of printing "foreign newes" to Butter and Bourne, "they paying yearly towards the repair of St. Paul's the sum of £10." Such a measure could hardly last; there was a general demand

for domestic intelligence, and the creation of the Post Office in 1637 made the means of supplying it more practicable.

In 1641 the Star Chamber was abolished, and with it the licensing of the Press. At once news-books of the most ephemeral character sprang into existence, and were so scurrilous that in 1643 the House of Commons appointed Henry Walley Clerk to the Company of Stationers, reimposed the control of the Press, and, in spite of Milton's magnificent protest in the "Areopagitica," maintained it till 1655, when Cromwell suppressed all journals but his own official organs.

From 1641 to 1655 news-books abound. On the Royalist side, the most important is the "Mercurius Aulicus," written by Sir John Berkenhead, and printed at Oxford, which persisted from January, 1643, to September, 1645, and though it respected truth but little when it wished to keep up the spirits of its party, yet it had a certain vigour and some satirical power.

On the Parliamentary side, perhaps the most reliable are the "Diurnall Occurrences" and the "Perfect Diurnall," but there were so many ephemeral news-books on both sides that it is futile to enumerate them, and more profitable to indicate their characteristics.

They are primarily important as historical material; rarely have they any literary merit. When a "leader" exists, it is either a torrent of abuse of some rival paper, or a pious exhortation enriched with the more damnatory portions of the Old Testament.

In one case only, the "Perfect Weekly Account," May 8, 1644, have we found an editorial which deserves quotation. There the writer, moved by the contrast between the resurrection of the springtide and the mortality of war, breaks out. "Walking this morning forth into the wood alone, I know not whither to in-

17.6

STRANGE

NEVVES

FROM

NEWGATE and the OLD-BAILY:

OR

The Proofs, Examinations, Declarations, Indictments, Conviction, and confeſſions of *I. Collins*, and *T. Reeve*, two of the Ranters taken in Mote lane, at the Generall Seſſions of Goal-Delivery, holden in the Old-Baily the twentieth day, of this inſtant *January*, the Penalties that are inflicted upon them. The proceedings againſt one Parſon *Williams* for having four wives, and *John Jackſon* a Scots Miniſter, condemned to be drawn, hanged, and quartered, for proclaiming *Charles Stuart*, King of England, with the ſtrange and wonderfull judgement of God ſhewed upon one *T. Kendall*, a Ranter in Drury-Lane who fell down dead as he was affirming that there is no God, or hell to puniſh. Publiſhed according to Order.

London, Printed by *B. Alſop*, 1651.

A Typical News-Book
1651. Bodleian Library

crease or allay my melancholy by the beautie and the musicke of the spring, there might I behold the youthful windes struggling with the flowers. The Musicke was placed on every tree, the Oake chanted to the Elme, the Hazel answered to the Hawthorne, not so much as the Grasshopper on the ground could containe his obstreperous joyes, drunk with the morning dew. But tell me, Readers, is not this a lazie and ungratefull speculation to regard the delights of Peace, when Warre hath almost covered this Nation with Fire and Blood, when the rattling of the Drum, the shrill sounding of the Trumpet, the confused neighing of the Horse, . . . the cries of the pursuing and the groans of the dying, are heard into every corner of the Kingdom."

This is a solitary instance ; more typical is the opening paragraph in an issue of " Mercurius Britannicus." " Now come on Academicus, down with your pack, and let's see what peddling stuff you have brought to town."

As historical material, the news-books preserved in Thomason's collection in the British Museum, and in that of Anthony à Wood in Bodley's Library, are invaluable ; they contain reports of debates in the House of Commons, letters and dispatches from commanders and private soldiers in both armies, details of political and criminal trials ; in short, the record of the war.

It is extraordinarily interesting to trace in the rival news-books a campaign day by day, to see the efforts to keep up public spirit and to conceal the details of defeat ; while almost equally valuable to the student of social history are the curious records of the persecution of Quakers, Levellers, and witches, and the evidence of credulity furnished by such items as " the appearance of a perfect mermaid near Greenwich, blown ashore

by the high wind, with her comb in one hand and her looking-glass in the other."

Correspondence in the strict sense did not exist; news was presented often in the form of letters from agents at home or abroad, but we have found only one instance of the modern type of correspondence in the "Moderate" of 1649, where the Earl of Rutland asked the editor to publish a letter relating to a dispute between himself and the miners on his Derbyshire estate, and when the editor was blamed for inserting the letter, he defended himself in the next issue by stating "that he had received Instructions from the Earl's Agent or Steward, and that the Earl was his Honourable good Lord," though he adds characteristically that he has also published the miners' petition on the matter to the House of Commons.

Advertisements do not appear till 1655, and then only creep in slowly, a notice of the new drink coffee, "a simple Innocent thing incomparable good for those that are troubled with melancholy," or a description of a runaway apprentice, or a thief, like the "black-haired maid with her face full-marked with the small-pox," who stole her mistress's clothes and went away, "in a greyish cloth turned and a coloured paragon upper petticoat and a green tawney under one."

So little capital was needed to start a news-book that men of very varied type took to journalism; all it needed was "the pen of a ready writer" and a complete lack of scruple.

Among these early journalists were Samuel Pecke, the scrivener, who had a little stall in Westminster Hall, and wrote the "Perfect Diurnall"; John Dillingham, a tailor; and Henry Walker, ironmonger and literary pirate. But perhaps the most contemptible, if the best known, was Marchamount Nedham, whom

Cromwell employed from 1655 to 1658 to write his official journals, the "Mercurius Politicus" and the "Publick Intelligencer." It would be difficult to find a more unscrupulous journalist, for Nedham wrote first for the Parliament, then for the King, then for Cromwell and his son, until on the eve of the Restoration he was ejected by the Rump, and fled to Amsterdam, whence after a short interval he returned, procured his pardon from the king with his usual adroitness, and then settled down to a life of less excitement and more respectability as a family physician.

It was to Nedham's palpable lies that we owe the rise of the founder of modern journalism, Henry Muddiman, a London schoolmaster, whom Monk employed in 1659 to counteract Nedham's falsehoods, with an accurate version of his proceedings, in the "Parliamentary Intelligencer." With the Restoration, Muddiman's prosperity was assured; he was attached to the office of the Secretary of State, all journals other than his own, the "Parliamentary Intelligencer" and the "Mercurius Publicus," were suppressed, and to himself alone was given the invaluable privilege of sending and receiving letters freely through the post.

It was this concession which enabled Muddiman to establish his agents in different places, and so to obtain that detailed information which made his journals worth purchase, while in addition he gradually built up a large connection of private customers, to whom, for £5 a year, he supplied a regular written news-sheet, giving items of Court life, and general news and details of Parliamentary proceedings which it was now illegal to print. Thus in 1663, when he lost his place as Official Intelligencer through the appointment of Sir Roger L'Estrange as Surveyor and Licenser of the Press, he was not at a loss, his news-letters

remained to him, and also his privilege of free postage.

Sir Roger L'Estrange was a Norfolk squire, with a talent for hunting down Fifth Monarchy men, but with little journalistic ability. He was quite unable to compete with Muddiman, and in 1665, when the Court moved to Oxford to avoid the Plague, Arlington, as Secretary of State, invited the latter to produce a new official journal. This was the "Oxford Gazette," which appeared on November 16, 1665, written by Muddiman and printed by the University printer. It consisted of a single sheet, printed on both sides in two columns, and it was the first modern newspaper as distinct from the news-book.

When the Court returned to London, the Gazette became known, as it is to-day, as the "London Gazette," but after February, 1666, Henry Muddiman wrote for it no more, and, after a brief editorship of a paper for Sir William Morice, confined himself to his newsletters.

Robbed of its founder and editor, the Gazette declined steadily in interest; it gave royal proclamations, a certain amount of foreign intelligence and Court news, but it could not compete with Muddiman's written news-letters. "Mr. Muddiman's intelligence was very large, persons of the greatest quality were constrained to betake themselves to it," wrote a correspondent from Harwich in 1667, and this continued to be the case till 1687, when his monopoly of free postage expired. Two years later he ceased writing, and in 1692 he died.

So ended the career of a remarkable man, to whom full justice has been done in a recent biography by his descendant. Undoubtedly Henry Muddiman was the founder of modern journalism; shrewd and capable, with a certain fluency and literary capacity, he had

the true journalist's gift of being able first to gauge the public mind and then to supply it with the news it desired, while his style is clear and intelligible, devoid of ornament, and in its brevity a distinct relief from the turgid utterances of his lesser contemporaries. In politics he was a Tory, but he placed his duty to the public above his prejudices, and his account of the Popish Plot and the King's Dissolution of the Oxford Parliament are marked by the same dispassionateness.

In 1679 the Printing Act of 1663 expired, and Shaftesbury characteristically took immediate advantage of it to bring out his "Domestick Intelligence, published to prevent false reports," his object being to foment the agitation against the Duke of York. Later he re-named the paper the "Protestant Intelligence," but it became so virulent that in April, 1681, the king suppressed it. From 1681 till 1684 the struggle between the Crown and the Whig newspapers continued; the king enlisted in his service Sir Roger L'Estrange once again, to meet abuse with abuse, and ultimately the Court triumphed and the Opposition was silent.

Under James II the Printing Act was restored, and remained in force till 1695, when the Press was freed from all restriction. At once, as in 1641, innumerable journals sprang into life; the "Flying Post" of the Whigs, the "Post-Boy" of the Tories, which came out three times a week, were followed in 1702 by the "Daily Courant," the first daily paper.

During the century the advertisement column in the paper increased in importance. Of these later notices we cannot refrain from quoting that from the "Mercurius Politicus" of 1660, publishing the loss of the king's dog, for it might have been written by its

master: "We must call upon you again for a black dog, between a grey-hound and a spaniel, no white about him, only a streak on his breast and tail a little bobbed. It is His Majesty's own dog, and doubtless was stolen, for the dog was not born nor bred in England and would never forsake his master. Whoever finds him may acquaint any at Whitehall, for the dog was better known at Court than those that stole him. Will they never leave robbing His Majesty? The dog's place (though better than some imagine) is the only place which nobody offers to beg."

Another notable advertisement is of a matrimonial agency: "I know of several men and women whose friends would gladly have them matched, which I'll endeavour to do as from time to time I shall hear of such whose circumstances are likely to agree, and it shall be done with all the honour and secresy imaginable."

Into a wholly different category from these newspapers must be placed Defoe's "Review of the Affairs of State," which he began to write in Newgate, and continued to produce three times a week from 1704 to 1713, for it was more the precursor of the modern quarterly in its literary style and breadth of treatment. Akin to it were the "Tatler" and the "Spectator," which appeared in 1709 and 1711, the work of Addison and Steele, in which journalism became literature; but both these periodicals are more in the nature of a series of essays on current topics than a record of events, and they belong more to the history of the review than to that of the newspaper.

So by 1715 the newspaper was established, the Press was a power recognized by every party, vexatious taxes like the duties of 1712 might be levied by the State in a futile attempt to cripple it, but its victory was

assured, for it represented the steady growth of public interest and participation in national life and politics, and before that inevitable evolution the Crown would have to bow.

CHAPTER XV

SICKNESS AND SUPERSTITION

THE seventeenth century was a period in which the idea of sickness and of death was seldom absent from the minds of thoughtful men and women, and this not because it was an age of greater mortality on the whole than those which preceded or followed it, but rather through a combination of causes both physical and intellectual.

In the sixteenth century the Renaissance had emphasized the dignity of the body, and the influence of this conception is seen in Elizabethan England in its frank delight in physical pleasures and its open admiration of strength and beauty; but when the Tudor period passed away in its exuberance, it left behind it that uneasy sense of the transitoriness of human life which is reflected in the literature, the art, and the daily life of Stuart men and women.

Nor can this view of existence be ascribed solely to Puritanism; although it drew much of its inspiration from the rigidity and fatalism of Calvin, yet it is stated equally clearly by men of such different types as Sir Thomas Browne and Jeremy Taylor. The philosopher declares, "For the world I count it not an Inn, but an Hospital, and a place not to live but to dye in"; while the Bishop bids men remember, "This is no place to sit down in, but you must rise

as soon as you are set, for we are people but of a day's abode, we must look somewhere else for an abiding city, a place in another country to fix our house in, whose walls and foundations is God, where we must find rest or be restless for ever."

In part this conception was also the product of the curiosity of the Renaissance; men felt hedged about with mystery, and they were not content to accept it; they wished to explore it, and so the seventeenth century is an age of extraordinary credulity relieved by the steady growth of a scientific spirit.

In medicine we see clearly the two tendencies at work; there was the old attempt to find a formula to explain the origin of disease, which led men to believe in the theory of "humours," and at the same time the new and scientific spirit which sought to base its hypothesis on an examination of instances.

Unfortunately, the belief in the theory of humours was the stronger factor; it coloured the pathology of the century, and it certainly arrested the progress of experimental diagnosis. According to this theory, four kinds of liquids or humours dwelt in the body, blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy. Of these four, blood and choler made for heat and energy, while phlegm and melancholy were cold and moist, and acted as a bridle on the stronger elements. Health, therefore, was a condition of harmony between the four humours; if this delicate balance was upset, illness resulted. In short, the body of the sick man was "a turmoil of humours."

Such a theory not only gave the physician a useful formula, and the layman a dogmatic explanation of disease, but was frequently utilized by the poet to explain the mysteries of human personality. In his

play "Every Man out of his Humour" Ben Jonson thus applies the theory:

> "So in every human body
> The choler, melancholy, phlegm and blood,
> By reason that they flow continually
> In some one part, and are not continent,
> Receive the name of humours. Now thus far
> It may by metaphor apply itself
> Unto the general disposition,
> As when some one peculiar quality
> Doth so possess a man that it doth draw
> All his effects, his spirits and his powers
> In their confluxion, all to run one way,
> This may be truly said to be a humour."

Thus the aim of the physician was first to discover which humour had upset the proper balance and then to restore it to its normal equilibrium; consequently, when the patient was feverish, blood-letting was advised to reduce the sanguinary humour in the body to its proper proportions.

Very different from this empirical reasoning is the scientific spirit which we find in William Harvey and Sir Theodore Mayerne, for this was founded on the philosophy of Bacon, and sought by experiment and minute observation to collect a sufficient number of instances for the erection of an hypothesis. No better example of such work can be found than the famous treatise, "Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis," published by Harvey in 1628, in which he proved conclusively his theory of the circulation of the blood, and so laid the foundation of a new physiology, for though the sixteenth century had realized that the blood was not stagnant, it had not been able to explain its motions. In the history of anatomical research, also, Harvey's thesis is a landmark, for his results were only obtained by innumerable

dissections on dogs, pigs, serpents, and many smaller animals.

In appearance, John Aubrey tells us that Harvey was " not tall but of the lowest stature, round-faced, olivaster hair black as a raven, but quite white twenty years before he died," while in character he seems to have been cheerful and kindly. In politics he was a Royalist, as was natural to a Court physician ; he accompanied Charles I on his visit to Scotland in 1639, and was present at the battle of Edgehill, while when the Court moved to Oxford he was made Warden of Merton. With the downfall of the Royalist cause, Harvey retired to London, and there devoted himself to study. When his friend Sir George Ent visited him, he found him " with a cheerful and sprightly countenance, investigating, like Democritus, the nature of things," and when asked if all were well with him, he replied : " How can that be, when the state is so agitated with storms and I myself am yet in the open sea ? And, indeed, were not my mind solaced by my studies and the recollections of the observations I have formerly made, there is nothing which should make me desirous of a longer continuance. But thus employed, this obscure life and vacation which would disgust other minds is the medicine of mine."

It was a fitting end to such a career that when Harvey died he endowed an annual oration to be made at his college, Caius College, Cambridge, " in which the fellows were to be exhorted to search out and study the secrets of nature by way of experiment, and also for the honour of the profession to continue mutual love and affection amongst themselves."

Less of an anatomist than Harvey, but more of a physician, was Sir Theodore Mayerne, a Swiss by

birth, who, after reading medicine at Heidelberg, Montpellier, and Paris, took his M.D. at Oxford and settled down in England. Mayerne soon became the leading physician of the day; he attended many famous personages in his time, and the twenty-three volumes of elaborate case notes which he bequeathed to the College of Physicians show a minuteness of observation worthy of Harvey. Sometimes his comments on his patients are distinctly amusing. Of James I he writes, "In drink he errs as to quality, quantity, time, and order, he has the strongest antipathy to water and all watery drinks," and adds, "The King laughs at Medicine and holds it so cheap that he declares physicians to be of very little use and hardly necessary; he asserts the art of Medicine to be supported by mere conjectures and useless because uncertain."

Henrietta Maria was more appreciative, and when she lay grievously ill at Exeter during the Civil War, before the birth of the Princess Henrietta, she wrote to Mayerne begging him to come to her, while Charles sent an urgent note to the same effect, "Mayerne, for the love of me, go to my wife."

Both Harvey and Mayerne were members of the Royal College of Physicians, founded in 1578, which did much towards raising the status of the profession and improving its knowledge.

Inferior to the physician in status was the surgeon. It is true he had his society, the Company of Barber-Surgeons, incorporated in 1462, but it was seldom that he had read medicine at the university; generally he had learnt both anatomy and surgery as apprentice to a surgeon. Such men followed the march of armies to gain experience. We find John Woodall, who died in 1643, Master of the Barber-Surgeons, travelling

in this fashion in his youth in France, Germany, and Poland, gathering in a width of knowledge and a technical skill which made him one of the foremost surgeons of his day. Woodall is an interesting figure in the history of surgery, for he did much to raise its status. In the sixteenth century, men of low repute, but with a certain manual dexterity, had dabbled in surgery, but when Woodall was Master of his company, he was able to assert: "We not only examine Chirurgeons and try their skill in that way as being of ancient time used and practised among us, but also we have profitable, learned and experienced lectures read amongst us."

Everywhere we see signs of the growth of this new and more scientific spirit, and an interest in anatomy and physiology was not peculiar to the medical profession. When John Evelyn visited Leyden in 1641, it was the anatomy school which he particularly admired, while in Paris, in 1650, he visited the Hospital of La Charité to witness the operation "of cutting for the stone."

Later, when the Royal Society was incorporated in 1662, "for the promotion of Physico-Mathematicall Experimentall Learning," Evelyn often met at its meetings another scientist, Robert Boyle, seventh son of the Earl of Cork, founder of Boyle's Law, and one of the most original minds of the seventeenth century. Boyle was a delicate man, and had suffered so much from physicians that at first he applied himself "to the study of physick that he might have the less need of them that profess it." From the study of anatomy in Dublin, Boyle went on to Oxford, became one of that little group of scientists presided over by "the universally obliging" Dr. Wilkins, of Wadham, and devoted himself to chemical research with such

ardour that in 1660 he was able to publish his results in his treatise, "Experiments physico-mechanical touching the spring of the Air and its Effects made for the most part in a new Pneumatical Engine." From that time till his death in 1691, Robert Boyle never ceased to experiment, he contributed frequently to the "Transactions" of the Royal Society, and, by his researches into the pressure of solids and fluids, the weighing of water, and the hidden qualities of air, paved the way for the work of his follower, Isaac Newton.

Yet when Boyle was ill in 1671, he tell us that "the dried flesh of vipers seemed to be one of the usefullest cordials I took," and the fact illustrates the curious nature of many of the remedies which the College of Physicians included in their pharmacopœia in 1618. In general the prescriptions dispensed by the Company of Apothecaries and ordered by physicians were of considerable antiquity, and consisted usually of vegetable or animal ingredients, as chemical medicines only slowly won recognition.

Many of these remedies may be found in old herbals, and some are exceedingly curious. For instance, a prescription for the lungs runs thus: "Take the lungs of a Foxe and drie it to powder and put a quarter of a spoonfull into a little Almond milke or broth and eate it, and it is very good to preserve the Lungs." Even more recondite is the medicine that was recommended to King Henry the Seventh by his physician against the pestilence: "Take halfe a handfull of Rew, likewise of Mandragories, Featherfew, Sorrell Burnet, and a quantity of the Crops and rootes of Dragons, and wash them cleane, and seeth them with a soft fire in running water from a pottle to a quart, and then straine them together through

a cleane cloth, and if it be bitter, put thereto a quantity of sugar-candy, and if this medicine be used before the Purples do arise, yee shall be whole by God's grace."

Still stranger is the prescription for measles, by which a live sheep was to be laid on the bed "because these creatures are easily infected and draw the venom to themselves, by which means some ease may happen to the sick person."

Remedies were thus very much a matter of traditional knowledge; every district had its folk-lore on the subject, and men and women alike took an interest in it. Indeed, Lord Herbert of Cherbury declared "it will become a gentleman to have some knowledge in medicine, especially the diagnostic part, whereby he may take more timely notice of a disease, and by that means timely prevent it." But more often it was the women of the household who handed down to their daughters the traditional remedies, and even an elementary knowledge of surgery, so that we read of Mistress Elizabeth Bedell that "she was very famous and expert in chirurgery, which she continually practised upon multitudes that flocked to her, and still gratis, without respect of poor or rich."

If the general level of medical knowledge among women was high, the status of nurses was low; they were invariably drawn from the poorer classes, and their pay was poor, while the exclusion of women from any scientific training in the College of Physicians or in the Company of Barber-Surgeons prevented even the skilled woman from winning professional recognition.

In the London hospitals women were employed freely. At St. Bartholomew's, in 1637, there were fifteen sisters, who were paid 50*s.* a year in addition to their board and lodging, while during the Civil

War a gratuity of 10*s.* was given to each nurse for attending wounded soldiers, and their board wages raised from 3*s.* a week to 3*s.* 6*d.* in "regard to their extraordinary pains about soldiers these several years past and for their future encouragement in their business." Women, too, were also employed as nurses in St. Thomas's Hospital, and in Ely House and the Savoy, which were the chief institutions for the care of wounded soldiers and sailors, and on the whole they seemed to have been fairly competent, for if in 1656, at St. Bartholomew's, three sisters were dismissed "for disturbing the patients by fighting," and if in 1704 nurses were forbidden "to entice patients into public-houses to drinke with them," yet against this must be put the public recognition by the hospital of their services to the wounded during the Civil War, and the heroic devotion of Margaret Blague, the Matron of St. Bartholomew's, in the Great Plague, who not only stuck to her post, but "adventured herself to the greate perill of her life" in her care of the sick.

It is impossible here to do more than allude to the numerous activities of the hospitals, the care of the insane and feeble-minded in the Bethlehem Hospital, the "Bedailles" who walked the City to report to the hospital almoners those suffering from infectious disease or counterfeiting illness, the daily services in the hospitals, and the public thanksgiving which the patient made to God on being cured, in the presence of two officials of the hospital. All this anyone interested in the history of our great hospitals will find in Dr. Norman Moore's delightful history of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, together with much curious information as to the diet of patients and the cost of wooden legs.

Undoubtedly the benefits conferred by these institutions upon the poor of London cannot be overestimated, for throughout the century "the pestilence that walketh by noon-day" recurred with terrible frequency, and the Great Plague was only one of a series of epidemics.

It is hardly surprising, for every householder threw his garbage into the gutters of the close and narrow streets, while houses were low and so utterly devoid of sanitation that when the plague appeared it spread with terrible rapidity. Defoe's vivid picture of the Great Plague, and Samuel Pepys' uneasy daily comments upon it, have familiarized us with the horro s of that epidemic; but less well known is the visitation of 1625, when a contemporary wrote from London: "The want and misery is the greatest here that ever any man living knew, no trading at all, the rich all gone, housekeepers and apprentices of manual trades begging in the streets."

If plague was common all over England at intervals, more frequent still were the outbreaks of smallpox; in fact, men record its appearance in their families without the least surprise. It attacked old and young, rich and poor, with a terrible impartiality, and little seems to have been known as to any means of checking its ravages or preventing its recurrence.

As we read of the plague which stalked through the country-side, the smallpox which decimated families, and the dysentery which raged in the Navy, we realize how puny were the efforts of medical science to cope with such malignant forces. Is it surprising that, in face of such perplexing calamities, men fell back on the explanation that they were the work of the devil and his agents?

In the Middle Ages men had realized vividly that

demons and angels fought for the human soul, yet, in spite of this belief, it is a striking fact that the most severe persecution of witchcraft is not found in the twelfth but in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and it is surely the very irony of history that just when the human mind was reaching out to a new freedom in scholarship and in politics, in its relation to witchcraft it is not only retrogressive, but far more cruel than ever before.

What had been a general belief in evil spirits was now more precisely defined. James I, in his " Demonologie," after giving the Scriptural evidence of the " Witch of Endor " to prove the existence of witchcraft beyond all dispute, goes on to tell how some men become masters of demons and can raise them at will, while others, weaker souls, sell themselves to the devil himself, and receive on their bodies the mark which stamps them as his, by its insensitiveness to pain.

There was no limit to the evil which such agents of the devil could effect ; they raised tempests, they haunted children till they fell into convulsions, they blighted cattle and crops, and, it is hardly necessary to add, they possessed an alarming agility, for they rode on broomsticks, they flew up chimneys, and they walked on the waters ; in fact, Shakespeare's witch in " Macbeth," who swears she will sail to Aleppo in a sieve, is typical of them.

From such a catalogue of activities one expects to find the witch a person of supernatural strength and energy ; instead, she was generally some frail old woman of disordered intellect, who, after living lonely among her inquisitive and credulous neighbours, at last became suspect through her very loneliness.

" There are opinions," says Lecky, " which may be traced from age to age by footsteps of blood," and a

THE

Witch of the Woodlands :

OR, The

Coblers New Tranſlation ;

Written by *L. P.*

Here Robin the Cobler for his former evils,
Was puniſht worſt then Fauſtus was with de-
vils.

London, Printed for *John Stafford*, dwelling at the Signe of the *George* at *Fleet-bridge*. 1655.

WITCHCRAFT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Title-page of Tract. 1655. Bodleian Library

belief in witchcraft is one of these, for its history is the record of sheer cruelty. All over Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and even into the eighteenth, hundreds of witches were tortured into fictitious confessions, and then burnt alive or drowned. " They died alone," says Lecky, " hated and unpitied," for " they were deemed by all mankind the worst of criminals."

In England the height of the persecution was reached " in the reign of the saints " under the Commonwealth. It was then that the nefarious witchfinder, Matthew Hopkins, hunted down and tortured infirm old women for a remuneration by their town of 20*s.* for each conviction, and it is in the same period, when the kirk was all-powerful in Scotland, that we get a persecution unrivalled in Europe for its cruelty and extent.

So fantastic and horrible is the history of witchcraft that inevitably we expect to find the finer minds of the age denying its reality, yet Sir Thomas Browne declared, " for my part I have ever believed and do know that there are witches; they that doubt of these are obliquely and upon consequence a sort not of Infidels but of Atheists," and Whitelock, in his "Memorials," records, without a word of disapproval, the most horrible tortures of Scottish witches. After the Restoration, the tension of men's minds was relaxed ; they were less conscious of the forces of evil, and slowly the growth of scientific knowledge made natural phenomena a little more intelligible, so that the persecution of witches abated, and finally disappeared in the early years of the succeeding century.

Yet below the surface the old superstitions lingered ; men still felt that they were compassed about with mystery, and the interest in omens and portents shows little diminution even at the close of the period. So,

to understand the seventeenth century from this aspect, we must regard it as a kaleidoscope of shifting colours. Faith and doubt, rationalism and credulity, a dawning toleration, and an expiring fanaticism, all have their place in a medley which is as fascinating as it is baffling.

CONCLUSION

THE seventeenth century is pre-eminently a study in contrasts, for it stands at the parting of the ways where the mediæval and modern worlds were meeting.

In every aspect of its life as we have viewed it, we have seen the two elements mingling: the country squire rules his tenantry with a feudal touch, but he is beginning to farm his land on modern methods; the scholar breathes the air of a mediæval university, but his thought is of the Renaissance, quick and inquisitive and eager for experiment.

In politics and in religion the same contrasts meet us: the mediæval conception of a unity in Church and State dies hard before the growth of an increasing individualism; while in politics the innovator is always the conservative, and there is no one so wedded to precedent as the republican.

Other contrasts are equally striking: the gaiety of the Cavalier lyrics is touched with the shadow of tragedy; outside the pageantry of the Court linger the vagrant and the outcast; while beside the solid prosperity of the merchant must be placed the sufferings of sweated labour.

Is there, then, no unity in the period? Is it nothing but a medley of warring elements?

Such a conclusion would not be just, for beneath all the diversity of age and sex, rank and poverty, we

have found qualities common to all—the eager curiosity of the Renaissance, the lively interest in ideas of a speculative age, and the passionate attachment to home and fatherland of a warm-hearted people.

It is to these fundamental characteristics of the seventeenth century that it owes its abiding charm.

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